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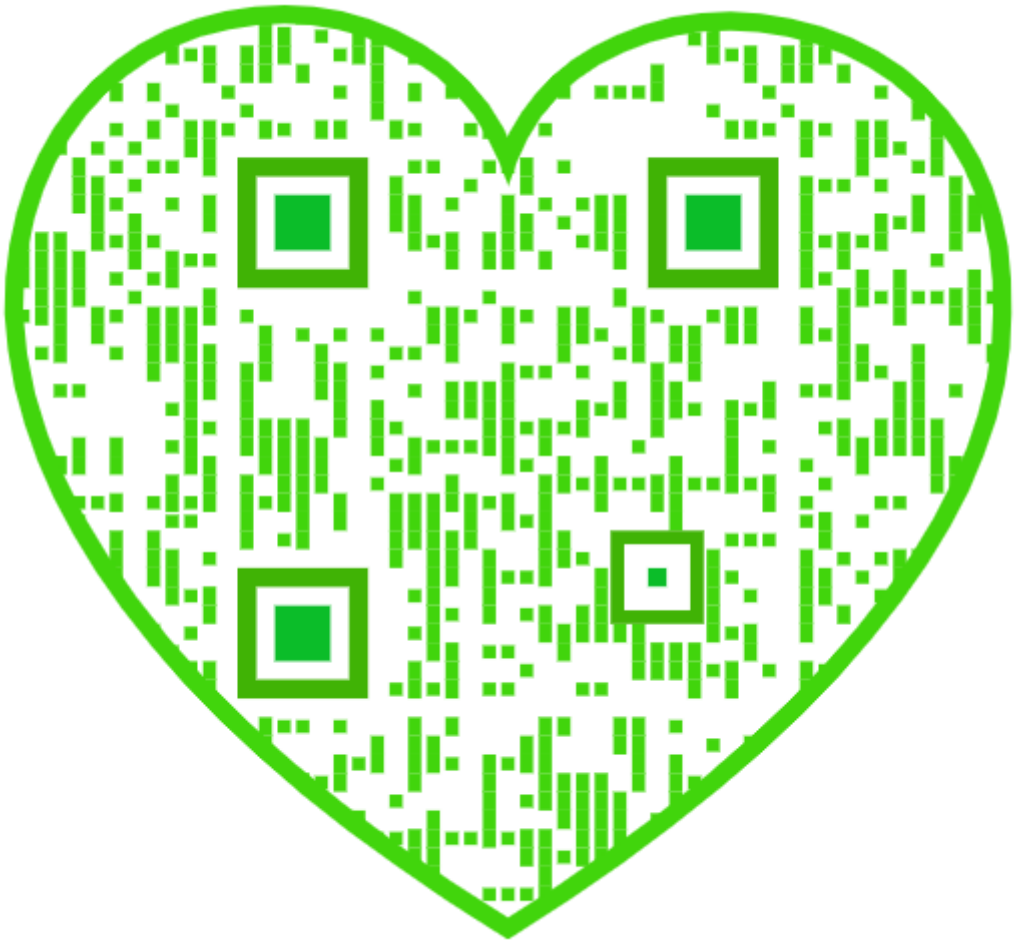

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BY

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PROFESSOR OF THE SCIENCE AND THE ART OF TEACHING IN THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
AUTHOR OF PRESIDENT GARFIELD AND EDUCATION; SCHOOLS AND STUDIES; THE OLD NORTHWEST; THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT; HOW TO STUDY AND TEACH HISTORY; JESUS AS A TEACHER; AND EDITOR OF THE WORKS OF JAMES ABRAM GARFIELD

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EDITOR'S PREFACE.

THE author of this volume has, in the course of his discussion of the theory and practice of teaching the language-arts, thrown light incidentally upon the teaching of all the other branches in the course of study. He has drawn judiciously upon the vast literature of his subject, and enriched his book with insights and keen observations from Aristotle and Quintilian in Greek and Roman times down to Spencer and Lowell of our own day. The book is in this respect a collection of fine thoughts on language—its use, its growth, the study of its mechanics, its grammatical and logical structures, the order of mastering its use in speaking, reading, and writing—first in the primary, next in the grammar school, and after in the high school and college; its place in the cultivation of the powers of thought, the study of literary works of art, the significance of philology among the sciences.

In following his discussions, the reader will do well to ponder carefully the distinction made by the author in the second chapter between the mechanism or technique and the theory of the language-arts; also the array of facts drawn from child study in Chapters IV, V, and VI relating to the ideas in possession of the child at six years of age, and to what he acquires and can acquire through imitation.

The author is at great pains to discriminate the me-

chanical and technical aspects of language study from its higher uses for guidance, culture, and discipline, and to give each its due place. The mastering of the mechanical and technical phases performs the great good of placing the child in relation to the repositories of the wisdom of the race so that he can use them. But it is their use, and not the mere possession of skill to use, that enables him to understand and interpret the world, and to penetrate the motives of human nature that govern the conduct of his fellow-men.

In Chapters VII, VIII, IX, X, and XIII this higher function of literature is brought out. The prevalent tendency to magnify the means rather than the end to be accomplished leads frequently in school to the error of using so much of the pupil's time in preparing to read—that is, in mere formal reading, the calling of the words found in lessons written in the colloquial style—that little opportunity is left for the practice of the art by reading the great literary works of art. But this error should not be corrected by the opposite extreme—namely, by offering the pupil in his immature years the solidest productions of prose and poetry and neglecting all formal studies with dictionaries, grammars, and spelling books. There are many impractical people who would throw away these formal studies and hope to change the child mind into a mature mind at once.

The discussion of the practice of paraphrasing in Chapter VIII places the matter in its true light. It is only by paraphrasing the text of the great author—explaining its meaning in his (the pupil's) own words—that the pupil can prove to his teacher that he understands it. The teacher in turn can show the felicities of the great writer best by comparison with the pupil's version, bringing out the superiority of the former in words

and diction. It has been truly said that the literary genius invents happy modes of expression for thoughts and feelings which were hitherto unutterable or inarticulate in the soul. The pupil in studying such gems of expression learns at once the thought or feeling and its happiest conveyance in words—he thinks and feels and expresses for himself what the poet has taught him. But paraphrasing, if used in any way except to verify the pupil's understanding of the author and for teaching him the value of the words and diction used as compared with his, the pupil's own attempts, is mostly wasted time.

In recent years there has been much so-called "language-study" in our schools ostensibly for the purpose of teaching the pupil how to write or compose with facility. He has been set at work writing numerous commonplace sentences about commonplace things. The result of this language-study has been described not inaptly as "gabble." The practice is a better one if it requires the pupils to write out in a connected manner what they have learned, say, on the occasion of a weekly written examination, or, still better, to write out their ideas gained by reading and studying literary models. The dignified content requires a dignified form. To write commonplace ideas in choice language always borders on the ridiculous.

On entrance into school at the age of six or seven years, the child knows only the words and forms of diction of the colloquial vocabulary. He has before him the hard task of mastering the new method of expressing words—that of script and printing; heretofore he has known words only as addressed to his ear. It is obviously the true method to teach him first the printed or written forms of colloquial words only—words already familiar to his ear. As soon, however, as this first mechanical stage can be passed, the pupil should begin the work on the

literary pieces. Each literary author has peculiarities of style, and draws words from the vocabulary outside of the colloquial list. He makes those partly unfamiliar words perform miracles of expression. The child should go on mastering one after another the one hundred or more pieces of fine writing which are generally to be found selected and edited for the school readers, although often mingled with other "pieces" that are of inferior merit. The teacher can, by a judicious use of books prepared for home reading, make the short selection in the reader an introduction to the reading of the whole work of literary art at home. A discussion of Gulliver's Lilliput or The Lady of the Lake will be a very profitable exercise in school after several pupils have read the entire work.

Dr. Hinsdale has, in Chapter XV, noted the fact that the teaching of English literature in our schools has begun hitherto with its history. It has been not a study *of* literature so much as a study *about* literature. It is hoped that this evil is in process of removal.

W. T. Harris.

Washington, D. C., *April 20, 1896.*

AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

SINCE this work was written, and since much of it was put in type, the teaching of English in the schools of the country has once more been brought prominently to the public attention. Reference is made to the late Report of the Committee on Composition and Rhetoric to the Board of Overseers of Harvard College, and the comments that it has called out in the press.* Remarks on the present state of English teaching will be found scattered through the following pages, but it seems desirable in this preface to take a broader view of the subject. The

* Report of the Committee on Composition and Rhetoric to the Board of Overseers of Harvard College (1892).

The Classics and Written English, C. F. Adams, Harvard Graduates' Magazine, vol. i, p. 177.

The Root of the Evil, W. W. Goodwin, Harvard Graduates' Magazine, vol. i, p. 189.

Report of the Committee on Composition and Rhetoric to the Board of Overseers of Harvard College, April, 1895.

College English, The Nation, September 26, 1895, p. 219.

School English, W. W. Goodwin, The Nation, October 24, 1895, p. 291.

School English, C. F. Adams, The Nation, October 31, 1895, p. 309.

College English, Caskie Harrison, The Nation, October 31, 1895, p. 310.

A Plea for the Study of Latin Grammar, X, The Nation, November 21, 1895, p. 362.

new report from Harvard, like the former one of the same committee, is not devoted to the broad subject of teaching English, but to the narrow subject of teaching composition. My own remarks will be similarly limited.

The main fact that is pressed home by the first report and reaffirmed by the second one is, that as the English department at Harvard "is organized, under the existing standards of examination, the college seems compelled, during the Freshman year, to do a vast amount of elementary educational work which should be done in the preparatory schools." And this view seems to be generally accepted.

The impression that has been made upon many minds, to the effect that the Harvard authorities hold college preparation in English now inferior to what it was formerly, has no support in the documents. The contention is rather that the present preparation is discreditable to the young men who come to Harvard, and the reverse of satisfactory to the schools from which they come, but no comparison with earlier times has been made or suggested. Manifestly such a comparison would be peculiarly difficult to make and of uncertain value, owing to the tendency of men in adult life to carry back into boyhood their later ideals and standards, and thus to mislead both themselves and others. It is possible that preparation in English for admission to Eastern colleges is inferior to what it once was, but if the mass of the American people are not better instructed in English than they were a half century ago or a quarter of a century ago, the fact is very discouraging, because constantly increased attention has been bestowed upon it in the schools.

Men who pass an intelligent judgment on the college preparation of Freshmen must first answer the question, "How much should be expected of young men and

women at the age of nineteen?" In the case of English the answer will be found more difficult than in the case of most or all of the other studies. It is easy for practised writers, like the Harvard Committee and Professor Goodwin, far removed as they are in memory from their own personal struggles to learn to write, and far removed also from the practical teaching of English in the schools, to look for more than can be reasonably accomplished. For example, after remarking that the average student in the Freshman class is two years older than formerly, the committee said in its first report: "It would certainly seem not unreasonable to insist that young men nineteen years of age who present themselves for a college education should be able not only to speak, but to write their mother tongue with ease and correctness." Correctness is now the note of English prose style. Furthermore, "ease and correctness" is a relative expression, and one can not tell just how much the committee means by it. But if the ease and correctness of the practised writer is what the committee has in mind, it is much mistaken. The obvious parallel between speech and writing must not be unduly pressed. The majority of men, even educated men, never become as proficient in writing as they do in speech. Perhaps they could attain to the same proficiency if they had the same practice in the one art as in the other, but this is an impossibility. The number of men called educated who can not write good English with ease, or even at all, is proportionately large. One could wish to see a collection of the verbatim and facsimile compositions of four or five hundred professional men, including a proportional number of college professors, written under circumstances similar to those that attended the writing of the exercises that are reproduced in the two reports. There are marked differences in per-

sons; but for the average student who goes to college to create, and then to maintain, anything that deserves to be called a style, is one of the severest tests of mental cultivation. Again, Professor Goodwin, commenting on some translations that he quotes, remarks: "There is one charge that can not be brought against the writers. They have surely not neglected their English for Greek. They are simply trying to translate from one unknown tongue into another." This remark suggests that translation is a severe test of ability to compose. The translator carries on a double struggle: one is to get at the thought of the original, the other to express this thought in the vernacular. It has often been remarked that translations by great poets are inferior to their original work. Translations should indeed be held up to Professor Goodwin's test, but many a schoolboy has found that either one of the two struggles involved a sufficient tax upon his powers.

So much it has seemed wise to say by way of moderating exaggerated ideas of schoolboy English; but the fact still remains that the English of the college Freshman is bad. Professor Goodwin scouts the idea that the preparatory schools that send pupils to Harvard have singled out the mother tongue for neglect and contempt. Nothing could be further from the truth than to think that the neglect of English is justified by the high standard of scholarship in Latin, Greek, and mathematics. "A similar test applied to any other department," he says, "would disclose a state of things in the lower ranks of scholarship which would be proportionally disreputable." There can be no doubt that the average American student at the age of nineteen, brought up in the secondary schools, is as much behind the English or Continental student of the same age in ability to compose in his mother tongue as he is in ability to perform other scholastic work. Pro-

fessor Goodwin says that boys of that age who come to Harvard College in most cases "are barely prepared to pass an examination which boys of sixteen or seventeen would find easy work in England, Germany, France, or Switzerland." He says, further, that at "Westminster School, London, boys of from fifteen to eighteen are studying Homer, Æschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, Aristophanes, Lysius, Plato, Lucretius, Terence, Horace, Cicero, St. Augustine, St. Cyril, with algebra, trigonometry, conic sections, statics, and dynamics." Much of this work is not required for admission to Oxford and Cambridge, but it all counts for honours. The Professor says further: "There is no hope of a substantial change for the better until the elementary studies which now occupy the time from fifteen to nineteen are put back where they belong, so that young men can devote themselves in earnest to studies which belong to their age." From this point of view, therefore, the question, Why is the English teaching in the secondary schools bad? is expanded into the broader one, Why is our secondary education as a whole bad?

This question has been much discussed the last few years, and in the course of the discussion it has been discovered that, in large part, the trouble lies below the secondary-school level. The Harvard Committee and Professor Goodwin tend to excuse the secondary teachers from blame for the bad preparation of students for college. The trouble, they say, is with the "system." This is extending the investigation to the elementary schools, which leads to the remark that the shortening and enrichening of the elementary course has been a favourite topic at educational meetings and in educational journals for some time past. I shall set down very briefly what appear to me to be the principal reasons why the American boy of nineteen, considered as a scholar, is two years in the

rear of the German, French, or English boy of the same age.

1. The courses of study that lead French and German boys to the university have been brought to a high degree of perfection. The studies have been so selected and so co-ordinated that time is saved all along the line. For example, in the German gymnasium Latin begins at ten and Greek at twelve, while modern languages are brought in at an early stage, thus assisting materially the mastery of German. The gymnasium is not a finishing school, but every step from the first one is bent toward the university. Practically the same may be said of the French and English schools. In the United States, on the other hand, secondary courses of study have not been as well thought out and tested. Moreover, the double function of many of our schools, and particularly of high schools, has impaired their efficiency in both spheres. Reference is made, of course, to the fact that these schools are at the same time finishing schools for life and fitting schools for college. To be sure, the courses of study intended for the two purposes more or less vary. Whether this impairment of the American school is inherent in the system or is due to defective co-ordination, need not be considered here.

The facts may be put in another way. In European countries schools are based on the existing social organization. The aim is to provide education for those youths who will pass out of school at thirteen or fourteen years of age, for those who will pass out of it at eighteen or nineteen, and for those who are destined for the higher institutions of instruction. These pupils are not taught together as far as the first class go, and the remainder are not all taught together as far as the second class go, but to a great extent are separate almost from the time that

they go to school, and are taught with reference to their supposed destination. All kinds of pupils may be taught together for the first three years, but this is not necessarily, or indeed commonly, the case. This is what may be called the "three-pyramid plan" of organizing schools. "The three courses of instruction," says Dr. Fitch, "primary, secondary, and higher, may be compared to three pyramids of different sizes, though all in their way symmetrical and perfect; but you can not take the apex of the larger pyramid and set it on the top of the smaller. You may indeed fit on, with a certain practical convenience, the top of the higher scheme of education to the truncated system of the lower, provided you go low enough," etc. Our State school systems are organized on the one-pyramid plan. The comparative merits of the two plans for general purposes is a topic aside from the present purpose. But the three-pyramid plan has two obvious advantages. One is that courses of instruction can be made out with sole reference to completeness in themselves, and the other that the abler pupils, who are the ones destined for college as a rule, are put by themselves, and so can move, even in elementary studies, at their own natural rate of speed. How far our social conditions would justify an attempt to reorganize our schools on this plan, and how far studies that are now taught exclusively in the secondary schools can be brought down into the elementary grades, are very interesting questions. For one, I look with considerable confidence to the experiments now being made in the second direction.

2. The teachers in the foreign schools, as a class, are superior to ours. They are better prepared to do their work, and they do it better. This preparation includes better scholarship, more distinct ideals, and superior teaching ability. These teachers know just what is expected of

them, and know they will be held responsible for the result. It is needless almost to refer to the fact that, on an average, they pursue their work for a much longer period of time.

3. National tone is a not unimportant factor in the question. The industrial, commercial, and political tension of American society is the highest known in the world. In this respect we are keyed up to the highest note. But in science, philosophy, and literature—that is, in the intellectual sphere proper—our tension is distinctly lower than that of England, France, or Germany. The average intelligence may be as high in this country, or even higher, but our higher culture so called is of a lower grade. The high intellectual tension of the educated class abroad is felt in the schools. There now lies before me a description of a German gymnasium written by a student of my acquaintance who passed through it, and I doubt whether there is a city in the United States where a school with such a regimen could be maintained. The key is too high for American life as now attuned.

What has been said about general culture is particularly applicable to the language-arts,—speech, reading, and composition, which are a very delicate test of personal cultivation. I have not hesitated to avow the opinion (page 54) that the relatively low standard of culture prevailing in the country, including teachers as well as pupils, is in large measure the cause of the low state of these arts in the schools. There is perhaps reason to think that the average cultivation of college students, including English, is lower than it was fifty years ago. Were not college students a more select body then than they are now? Did they not better represent the highest cultivation of the country? Have not the great increase of wealth, the enormous material improvements that have been effected,

and the growth of population, together with the democratizing of society, tended appreciably to make American college students, as a whole, a more heterogeneous class of persons?

What is the final conclusion? That we should remain satisfied with the teaching, and particularly the English teaching, as it is to-day? By no means. The present work has been written in the faith that improvement is attainable. Two or three practical remarks may be made on this point.

First. In the following pages I have laid constant stress on imitation in teaching the language-arts. Good models are insisted upon, I fear, to the weariness of the reader. Practice under suitable correction has also been emphasized. Remarking upon the proficiency in baseball and other athletic sports of the boys who come to Harvard College, the committee asks how it is acquired, and replies that it does not come by studying rules printed in books devoted to athletic sports, or by listening to lectures on curves and the like, but by practice. "It is only through similar, daily, and incessant practice," says the committee, "that the degree of facility in writing the mother tongue is acquired, which always enables the student or adult to use it as a tool in his work."

Secondly. The use of the word "tool" suggests a serious defect in many American schools. There is a great difference between set formal exercises in any art as an end in itself and the habitual use of the same art as a means or instrument to accomplish some other end. Mr. C. F. Adams, chairman of the committee, like many others, has remarked the difference between formal class spelling and spelling in ordinary writing. The same distinction may be made in respect to penmanship and drawing. How very different the writing that children

put in their familiar letters is from the writing that they put in their copy-books! And the same in composing. "For want of practice," says Mr. Adams, "the scholar does not carry into his other and daily work the results of his teaching. He can write a formal composition, such as it is; he can not render Greek or Latin into English." This is the crux of school composition. Nothing but plenty of writing, and particularly non-formal or extemporaneous writing, as in the daily work of the school under a moderate tension of criticism, will transmute the pupil's specific skill into formal skill. How wide the distance between the set composition and the extemporaneous composition of the common pupil or student! We need more extemporaneous composition in the schools. In this respect the German or the English student is distinctly better off than his American cousin.

The third and last suggestion is that much current language teaching affects English composition unfavourably. "Sight reading," which rests on the assumption that the student should understand the author in the original, has for some time been the vogue in preparatory schools. X points out very clearly that the revolt from the grammar and dictionary has gone so far that a positive deterioration of both classical and English scholarship has often resulted. He says students who come to Harvard, and picked ones, too, "have not even a conception of what accurate work means. They have obtained by practice a kind of knack of guessing at the meaning of a sentence; but in most cases they see it 'through a glass darkly,' often *very* darkly." This writer thinks, accordingly, that some of the emphasis recently given to sight reading should be withdrawn, and more stress be laid on thoroughness. The traditional importance assigned to translation as an English exercise may

be exaggerated. No doubt translation is sometimes a positive loss to the pupil's English rather than a gain, undoing, owing to slipshod methods, what formal instruction has done. Still, good translation is an important ally of the English teacher.

The purpose and scope of the present work are stated in the introductory chapter. While nothing more is called for on that head, a few words concerning its origin are deemed pertinent.

More than ten years ago, while serving as Superintendent of the Public Schools of Cleveland, Ohio, my attention was closely drawn to the nature and relation of speech, reading, language lessons, composition, and literature. I gave much thought to methods of instruction, and particularly to the correlation of the several lines of teaching. Afterward, when called to my present position, it became my duty to give instruction on these subjects as part of a course in the art of teaching. I now came more clearly to conceive of these arts as a distinct group by themselves, and to assign a new importance to imitation, and especially unconscious imitation, in learning them. Thus there gradually grew up, within the course referred to, a series of lectures denominated Lectures on Teaching the Language-Arts. These lectures, revised and extended, comprise this work. Whatever may be its merits, it has grown out of practical experience, and has been matured by reflection.

Those teachers who are abreast of the best current practice in the schools will find nothing in the book relating to method that is very novel or original. The claim to merit must rest on these particulars: First, the clear conception and description of speech, reading, and composition as arts; secondly, the large place assigned to use

and want, to models and imitation, and the small place to reflective art in teaching them; and, thirdly, the grounding of the several teaching processes in the fundamental facts of human nature. In other words, this is a book of principles illustrated by methods rather than of methods illuminated by principles. If this claim be allowed, I do not hold it to be a slight merit. With nothing do the teachers of the country stand in need of closer familiarity than with educational principles. Principles do not supersede methods; facts, rules; theory, practice; science, art: but principles, facts, theory, and science must, in the long run, govern and control all practical applications.

I have not therefore sought to add another to the list of "Lessons" and "Exercises" in English, "Composition Books," and the like, which is already so long, but rather to show the ends to which such books should look, the methods to which they should conform, and the reasons for such conformity. Exhaustive treatment has not been aimed at. The purpose has been to confine the discussion to schools; and if much of it has an application to colleges, as indeed it has, the reason is that the leading principles set forth are unlimited by grade lines, but are continuous.

My thanks are due to my friend Professor I. N. Demmon for valuable aid in preparing this work. I have had the benefit of his criticism on many special features of the work, and, what has been of greater value, have enjoyed repeated opportunities to discuss the subject with him in its general bearings.

B. A. Hinsdale.

The University of Michigan, *December 14, 1895.*

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TEACHING THE LANGUAGE-ARTS.

CHAPTER I.

THE SCOPE OF THE PRESENT WORK.

LINDLEY MURRAY spoke in accordance with the tradition that had been delivered to him when, at the close of the last century, he gave this definition: "English grammar is the art of speaking and writing the English language with propriety." It might at first seem that, starting with such a definition, the learned author would have given the world a practical rather than a scientific book—something like the books on Composition and Language Lessons that, in recent years, have poured into the schools like a flood. He did nothing of the kind. There could hardly be a wider gap between the definition of a subject and a treatise devoted to its discussion than the gap which lies between Murray's definition and the body of his English Grammar. He first declares grammar to be pure art or practice, and then treats it as pure science or theory. The same inconsistency appears in all the writers and teachers of that period. The grammatical tradition that these writers and teachers had received, was not suffered to influence the practice of the schools of the old *régime*. For example, the teachers devoted a great deal of time to parsing. The better pupils became profi-

cient in "parting"—that is, classifying—words; in declining, conjugating, and comparing them; in detecting and pointing out "agreement" and "government," and in applying rules of syntax which, it is fair to say, they did not half the time at all understand. There are many persons still living who went through much or all of Paradise Lost or the Essay on Man, or perchance The Course of Time, in this way. All this, it is almost superfluous to say, was purely theoretical work. The correction of false syntax, to which much time was given, was the only point at which the pupil touched practice at all; and there is great reason to fear that this exercise was harmful quite as often as it was beneficial. Beyond this little was done in the schools in the broad field of what we now call "English" and the "study of English." Below the college, grammar reigned supreme. Essay-writing was practised in some schools. Besides the exercises in reading, which were of course important, no attention was given to English literature, either in the schools or in the colleges.

It is now generally admitted, at least by competent authorities, that the Lindley Murray view of grammar is mainly false, and that the subject, taught in the traditionary way, has small practical value. No doubt the scholastic grammar was of much benefit to many pupils, as I shall point out in a future chapter; but here I must sketch the movement of ideas and the changes of school practice from the old days of formal grammar down to the present time.

The first real step forward was the introduction into the schools of sentence analysis. Parsing now began to fall into the background, though by no means as rapidly as could have been desired. Professor S. S. Greene contributed more to this end than any other writer that can

be named. His books, and especially his Treatise on the Structure of the English Language, commonly called "Greene's Analysis," exerted an influence upon authors and teachers that was both widespread and salutary. He had the great merit of giving prominence to synthetic or constructive work, limited, however, to sentence-building. He was the real author of the most generally accepted system of analyzing and classifying English sentences and their component parts. In the preface of his Analysis (1847) Greene enumerated some of "the numerous advantages arising from studying grammar, or rather language, through the structure of sentences"; but these advantages are all of a disciplinary character. In the Analysis he adheres to the old definition of grammar; but in his Introduction to the Study of Grammar (1867) he frankly says, "English grammar treats of the principles of the English language."

Professor Greene's books and those modelled after them prepared the way for the next step forward. This step consisted of what are technically called "Language Lessons," and sometimes merely "Language." These lessons are, in fact, nothing but an expansion of the synthetic work that has already been mentioned.

The appearance in the school curriculum of "English" in the technical sense marks the last movement along this line of study. The word means sometimes more and sometimes less. In its wide scope it includes language lessons, composition, Anglo-Saxon and Old English, formal and historical grammar, rhetoric, literature, and the history of literature. In its narrow scope it is confined to composition and literature and closely related subjects.

In no department of study have the schools recently seen more dissatisfaction, more unrest, and more experiment than in this one. Everything is in a flux: authors,

superintendents, and teachers seem to appreciate that something bearing the name of English must constitute a marked feature of the schools; but they do not, as classes at least, see clearly what it should be, or how it should be taught. As a whole, the schools are feeling their way; as a body, teachers are wasting a great deal of their own and their pupils' time and energy in efforts more or less aimless and misdirected; and there is little probability of the return of that unity and satisfaction which so strongly marked the Lindley Murray *régime*. Two things are clear: one is that the old *régime* can not be brought back; the second is that to teach English successfully requires a combination of cultivation, taste, judgment, and practical skill which is not found in the common teacher of the subject. Ability to state with positiveness what an ideal course should be, is not necessary to qualify one to affirm that, while there are some good teachers and more mediocre ones, the major part of the English work done in schools at the present time is unsatisfactory.

Reversing the order of statement, such is the present status of English in the schools, and such the steps that have led up to it. This account has not been given on account of any historical interest or value that it may possess, but rather as an introduction to a statement of the aims and purposes of the present work. These are as follows:—

1. To state fully and illustrate clearly the principles that underlie all practical language culture, whether it assumes the form of speech, reading, or composition—what I have ventured to call the language-arts.

2. To emphasize the value of such culture—the education that grows directly out of the use and study of the vernacular.

3. To present to teachers some methods and devices

that, intelligently followed, will enable them to carry on the child's instruction in the language-arts in harmony with the underlying principles. These methods and devices cover in a general way the whole field up to the college; they even touch the college, and reach far into the field of self-cultivation.

4. To discuss grammar and rhetoric with a double purpose: first, to determine wherein their principal educational value lies; and, secondly, to point out their relations to the language-arts. The teaching of literature and the functions of criticism in the language-arts will also receive merited attention. The order of this analysis will not in all cases be strictly followed.

CHAPTER II.

THE LANGUAGE-ARTS DEFINED.

BEFORE we can intelligently consider the special subject of this chapter, we must form clear ideas of science and art and their primal relation.

Science is knowledge and art is skill; or, more fully, science is organized knowledge, while art is educated skill. The same ideas are expressed by the terms "theory" and "practice." This is the fundamental distinction. Here art is actual skill, practice, or doing. But art has a second meaning; it signifies also a body of rules or precepts that guide skill, practice, or doing. This is the sense of art in the statement that science teaches us to know and art to do; or in the statement that the two differ as the indicative mode differs from the imperative, the first making declarations, the second issuing commands. This is the sense in which art is used in the familiar title, "The Art of Teaching." Practice conveys the same idea in the titles, "The Theory and Practice of Teaching," "The Theory and Practice of Medicine." The radical relation of the two elements is perfectly obvious: the science or theory of the book or course of lectures consists of the facts and principles advanced; the art or practice is composed of the rules and methods. To grasp this duality of art, practice and rules to guide practice, is most important The second is the conscious or reflective side of art.

The matters that are immediately pursued and taught in schools are commonly called "studies" and "subjects." While this usage is so well settled that there is little probability of its being changed, it is at the same time misleading in classification and mischievous in results, as can easily be made to appear.

In some school work the fundamental activity is doing or practice; in other work, learning or knowing. In the first case, the end is skill or practical power; in the second case, knowledge or intellectual power. The distinction is the same as that between art and science, practice and theory. The relation of the two is an intimate one. Knowledge leads to doing, and doing to knowing.

To separate the school arts from the school studies or subjects proper, it is only necessary to ask: "Which is the predominant activity, doing or knowing?" "Which the predominant end, skill or intelligence?" Touched by this question, speech, reading, writing, composition, the elements of arithmetic, drawing, manual training, and music declare themselves to belong to the one class; geography, history, grammar, literature, mathematics, and the sciences to the other. On the one side we have tools or instruments, on the other branches or divisions of knowledge. The principal of these arts or tools are speech, reading, and writing, and they constitute the subject-matter of this book. The others may be characterized in general, and then be dismissed once for all.

Most of the elementary school arts involve reading and writing of some kind. Arithmetical notation is a species of writing, numeration of reading. The other elements of arithmetic—addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division—are mere processes or methods of computation. They are as much arts as the abacus, or the contrivances used in calculation by the Chinese. All these elements—

the so-called fundamental rules—belong equally to the other branches of mathematics; but they are first acquired in connection with number or arithmetic, and they determine its practical character. Drawing is a form of writing. A draftsman makes a working drawing of a machine; a workman reads it and follows its directions. Manual training and music are confessedly arts; and, in general, it may be said that all systems of symbolism and nomenclature, all notations, signs, and alphabets, are mere tools, appliances, arts; they are not taught or studied as ends, but as means; they are put in the elementary school because they are essential to its real work, as well as to the work of life, and they give to it its predominant character.

Now we return to language. Vocal expression is instinctive, but speech is an art. The human infant spontaneously expresses himself in sounds, noises, cries of various kinds, but he does not spontaneously speak the German, the English, or the French language, or even any savage dialect of the desert or forest. As we shall see hereafter, it is imitation that transforms the infant's instinctive utterance into language. Perhaps oral speech is not commonly counted among the arts; but we virtually acknowledge that it is so when we speak of "the art of conversation" and of "the art of public speaking," for these forms of speech do not differ from common speech in kind. Moreover, speech is an art that is cultivated, or at least should be cultivated, in the school. Reading is a means of study and not a study itself. It discloses the contents of the printed page. It is skill for the completion of a work. It is an instrument of acquirement, and can be used with power and ease only through much practice. Writing is a means of record and impartation. It produces the printed page. It is the correla-

tive of reading, originating at the same time, and has long been known as the art preservative of arts. Composition is to the mind what writing is to the hand or speech to the vocal organs; it is the production and arrangement of ideas, as writing is of characters and speech of sounds; or, if composition is held to include expression, as properly it does, then it is a double art, including the arrangement of ideas and their expression in words.

We must not overlook the fact that the language-arts present the two phases that belong to the arts in general. They may be considered as practical skill for the accomplishment of some work, or as codes of rules creating and guiding skill. The child reads, writes, etc.; there are also rules for reading and writing. The relation of the pupil and of the teacher to these rules is a subject that will claim much of our attention at a more advanced stage of our discussion; here it suffices to say that reading as practical skill and reading as a code of rules are two very different things. The child goes to school to acquire the skill, and the rules are of practical value only in so far as they contribute to that end. It should also be observed that the two are by no means inseparable. A person may read well, and not be able to give any rules; he may also give rules in abundance, and not be able to read well, or even at all.

Nor must we overlook the fact that the language-arts, like the other school arts, are more or less connected with certain sciences. The art of music leans upon the science of music; drawing and manual training depend upon physics and mathematics; the principles of composition are found in grammar and rhetoric; while reading and writing go back to physiology and psychology.

It is not impertinent to remark that we are here dealing with reading and the other arts of the elementary

school as they are carried on in the school, and not as they are treated in books or lectures. If they are made the subject of scientific investigation; if they are treated reflectively; if rules, methods, facts, and laws occupy attention to the exclusion of skill on practice, then they become studies or subjects as a matter of course. But this is not the way in which they present themselves to the child holding in his hand his primer or his copybook.

Two additional observations may be offered. The first is that if reading, writing, and composition, as found in the schools, are studies at all, they are studies of a peculiar character. Little discrimination is needed to separate them from formal studies like grammar and rhetoric, or from real studies like mathematics and science. They do not become studies until they are subjected to scientific method; that is, until they are made the subject-matter of discussion and formal treatment. It is true that they all give the pupil some discipline, and that they all add something to his store of knowledge; but these are minor facts that do not determine their classification. At most, in the school they are tools or instrumental studies. The second observation is that if the distinction between the school arts and the school studies be pronounced unimportant, two answers may be made. Classification should rest on facts—should be scientific. Then the present designation of these arts as studies leads the teacher, or at all events *tends* to lead the teacher, to misplace the emphasis and to adopt a false method. If reading, for example, is regarded as a study or subject, rather than an art, the teacher is tempted to place rules or method above power to execute, and above the practice which alone can produce such power. Still more is this the tendency in teaching composition. Never, until the idea that composition is a "study" to be learned from a book is banished from the

school, will children be taught to write properly. Among the severest criticisms made upon the common school are these: "The reading and spelling are poor," "The mechanical work in arithmetic is laborious and inaccurate," "The composition is bad"; and these are faults that can be corrected only through practice. There can be no greater mistake in relation to the first stages of school education than that the *rationale* of a process is immediately valuable. A painter or musician knows his technical rules and his science, but neither his technical rules nor his science can take the place of technique or execution. It is by no means always true that a mathematician is "good in figures"; on the other hand, he is often poor. It is therefore extremely important that the teacher should clearly see whether the end to which a school exercise looks is skill or knowledge—practical power or intellectual power.

CHAPTER III.

THE VERNACULAR AS AN EDUCATIONAL INSTRUMENT.

The first view that men take of language, and the only one that most of them ever take, is the practical view. Language is a tool to be used in the commerce of life. Through it we receive the thought and feeling of our fellows, and convey our own thought and feeling to them in turn. The field of this peculiar commerce is so extensive that it gives rise to the three greatest arts—speech, reading, and writing. These pages abound in remarks on the value of these arts and their place in education. In the present chapter it is proposed to take a broader and more fundamental view of the subject. This is the more necessary, because a large majority of men, and even of teachers, never look beyond the immediate or practical uses of this great instrument of human intercourse to discover its further value.

The relation of language and the mind has furnished men of speculative habit some of the most interesting and difficult questions with which they have grappled. One of these questions, and perhaps the most fascinating of all, is whether general names denote real existence or only subjective existence—the old contention of the Nominalists and the Realists. Another and perhaps a more practical one is whether language and thought are inseparable. It is a tradition of the schools that without articulate

speech there is, and there can be, no real mental activity, at least no thinking. This tradition, inveterate as it is, is certainly untrue. The existence of human intelligence, independent of language, can be conclusively established.* It by no means follows, however, that the human intelligence can be fully developed, or even far developed, without language. On the other hand, mental growth can never advance beyond a certain rudimentary

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* Prof. Preyer, who is perhaps the highest authority on the subject, gives us the demonstration (see Mental Development in the Child). Preyer remarks, what indeed any intelligent observer can see for himself, that the child learns to make the discrimination of warm and wet, damp and cool, dry and warm, dry and cold, rough and hard, soft and smooth, heavy and light, at a time when as yet he gives no hint whatever in the direction of naming his feelings in words of articulate speech (page 30). He remarks too that deaf and dumb children in the first months do not differ essentially from normal children (page 31). Children born completely deaf have, "through the senses of sight and touch, a large number of ideas, and they often have a remarkable understanding" (page 88). The first time that a child with a spoon in his right hand strikes the table, notices the sound, and then, shifting the spoon to the other hand, repeats the experiment, he gives a sign of intellect that seeks for causes (page 85). Forest children that have been rescued from their imbrutement, and have learned to talk, have shown a mental development superior to the animals about them, and have turned to practical account in their new life what they had learned in the wilderness (pages 90–93). Again, the general conclusion is strengthened by analogous facts observed in the study of animals, in the fields and woods, in zoölogical gardens, and in the aquarium (page 84). Still, further, ideas are before words, and therefore before talking (page 89). Thinking, in the proper sense of the term, can not be taught to any one through verbal instruction. No child is at first instructed in thinking, but every child learns of himself to think as much as he learns to see and hear (page 69). In the child no special activity of intellect is proved by a special aptitude for acquiring words, but sometimes the contrary (page 94).

stage unless the child is in possession of an adequate means of expression. This is not denied. Furthermore, adequate means of expression implies a verbal language. Facial expression, looks, signs, gestures, pictures, and symbols do not suffice. The truth is, that we early learn to carry on our thinking in words; that in real human life thought and language are practically inseparable, and that neither one can be understood, or be intelligently discussed, without constant reference to the other. We may call intelligence the master of speech, but the servant is indispensable to the master.* Sir William Hamilton has appositely said that language is the godmother of knowledge. "Language is to the mind precisely what the arch is to the tunnel," he says; "the power of thinking and the power of excavation are not dependent on the word in one case, or on the mason work in the other; but without these subsidiaries, neither process could be carried beyond its rudimentary commencement."† We must, however, make this almost inseparable relation the subject of a closer investigation.

Not only have writers on psychology, logic, and philology discussed the genetic relation of thought and speech,

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* This fact Preyer also distinctly recognises. The history of imbruted children furnishes "the proof of the indispensableness of the learning of language for the attainment of *full* intellectual activity and the development of feeling by means of learning to speak in the first years of life; for they have almost all lost the ability to frame thoughts that go beyond the immediate surroundings, and to rise to higher concepts—to the highest reason." That the "capacity which first lends to human life its true worth is only possible through the learning of language—and in fact of verbal language, not picture language or sign language, or any other means of understanding—nobody denies."—Mental Development in the Child, p. 94.

† Logic, lecture viii.

but historians have marked the correspondence of their respective development. "Language lies at the root of all mental cultivation." So says the great historian of Rome, Dr. Theodor Mommsen; and no one has a better right to say so than he, unless it may be an equally eminent historian of Greece. The great languages of the world are no accidents; they are not found here and there at random, but belong to the great peoples. The thought, the imagination, the feeling of Greece could not have existed separate and apart from the Greek language. The force of character, the will, and the action of Rome were inseparably bound up with the Roman tongue. We can not think of the contributions that these two nations made to civilization as emanating from peoples who used feeble or meagre languages. But this is not all: not only must a great people live in a great language, but its language must be suited to its genius and life. Latin could not have been the language of Greece, nor Greek the language of Rome; and still less could Hebrew have been the language of either. An Englishman can not grow up in the French language, or a Frenchman in the English language. Hebrew expresses the deep spiritual conceptions of Judea; Greek, the profound and subtle philosophical and æsthetical ideas of Greece; Latin, the practical aims of Rome. German fits the Germans, French the French, English the English; and were the young of the three nations changed at birth a transformation of inherited character would immediately begin. We need not inquire more curiously into the relation existing between national character and language; it suffices us to know that the interaction between the two is constant and powerful. In a way, the national language is the best metre of the national genius and character.

As with the nation, so with the individual. A great

man can not live in a small or a barren language; and if he is compelled to make use of one that is below his purpose, as Dante in writing the Divina Commedia, Jerome in translating the Bible into Latin,* or Luther in translating it into German, he expands it and raises it to his own level by forcing into it new content, and so giving it a new rank in the world. But even so much as this he can not do unless the material is ready to his hand. Emerson tells us that a man's power to connect his thought with its proper symbol, and so to utter it, depends on the simplicity of his character—"that is, his love of truth, and his desire to communicate it without loss"; that "the corruption of man is followed by the corruption of language"; and that "picturesque language is at once a commanding certificate that he who employs it is a man in alliance with truth and God." † But this is only one side of the shield; Lowell gives us the other side. "The material of thought," says he, "reacts upon the thought itself. Shakespeare himself would have been commonplace had he been paddocked in a thinly shaven vocabulary, and Phidias, had he worked in wax, only a more improved Mrs. Jarley." ‡ Then a man's speech reflects not merely his moods, as of thoughtfulness or passion, but also his whole mental life. Thus language becomes, and particularly unpremeditated language, a measure of the man. All in all, it is a better metre of his cultivation than his manners. The dialect that the disciples of Jesus spoke "betrayed" much more than that they were Galileans. The correspondence is perfect between the mind of Mil-

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* See Dean Milman on Jerome's Bible, Latin Christianity, vol. i, p. 2.

† Nature, chap. iv.

‡ Books and Libraries, in Literary and Political Addresses.

ton, as erudite as poetic, and his diction; while Shakespeare is no more masterful in thought, delineation, and fancy than in vocabulary.

"What is that," asks Coleridge, "which first strikes us, and strikes us at once, in a man of education, and which, among educated men, so instantly distinguishes the man of superior mind, that (as was observed with eminent propriety of the late Edmund Burke) we can not stand under the same archway during a shower of rain without finding him out? Not the weight or novelty of his remarks; not any unusual interest of facts communicated by him, etc. . . . It is the unpremeditated and evidently habitual arrangement of his words, grounded on the habit of foreseeing, in each integral part, or (more plainly) in every sentence, the whole that he intends to communicate. However irregular and desultory his talk, there is method in the fragments." *

What has been said relates to vernacular languages. The word is derived from *vernaculus*, which comes again from *verna*, a slave born in his master's house; and it means the speech to which one is born and in which he is reared—the *patrius sermo* of the Roman, the *Mutter Sprache* of the German, the *mother tongue* of the Englishman. Command of a noble vernacular involves the most valuable discipline and culture that a man is capable of receiving. It conditions all other discipline and culture. Reference is not now made to its scientific study, to its history and philology, its lexical and grammatical elements; what is meant rather is the man's growing up in the language, so to speak, and using it for all the purposes of his mental life. The greatest mental inheritance to which a German, a Frenchman, or

* The Friend, section ii, Essay iv.

an Englishman is born is his native tongue, rich in the knowledge and wisdom, the ideas and thoughts, the wit and fancy, the sentiment and feeling, of a thousand years. Nay, of more than a thousand years; for these languages in their modern forms were enriched by still earlier centuries. To come back to the old thought, such a speech as one of these only flows out from such a life as it expresses, and is in turn essential to the existence of that life.

A man's lack of a cultivated language means one of two things: either that his mental and moral life must be confined and repressed, or that he must go abroad in quest of what he can not find at home. The deepest significance of the Renaissance is disclosed by the fact that, in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the minds of men had awakened to the barrenness of the mental waste about them; that they craved thought, sentiment, and beauty, of which their own tongues were destitute; and that they resorted to the Greek and Latin classics, which were at that time practically restored to the world. The weakest side of the Renaissance as an intellectual movement was, that it could not in any case be really national. Scholars might be developed and sustained on the old literatures, but not the people. However it may be with epicures, the common man can not subsist on exotic fruits. There is no example in history of a powerful national mental and moral life, unless it grows out of a vernacular culture and is supported by it. Witness the Jews, the Greeks, and the Romans.

What has been said leads up to our main topic. This is, the vernacular as an instrument of education. A learned Scotch writer contends that the study of the vernacular "is, and must always be, the supreme object in the education of a human being, the centre around which all other

educational agencies ought to arrange themselves in due subordination." The one argument that he presses, somewhat abridged, runs as follows:

Mind grows only in so far as it finds expression for itself; and this it can not find in a foreign tongue. It is round the language learned at the mother's knee that the whole life of feeling, emotion, and thought gathers. If it were possible for a child or boy to live in two languages at once equally well, so much the worse; his intellectual and spiritual growth would not be doubled but halved. Unity of mind and of character would have great difficulty in asserting itself. Language is at best only symbolic of the world of consciousness, and nearly every word is rich in unexpressed associations of life-experience, which gives it its full value for the life of mind. Subtilties, delicacies, and refinements of feeling and perception are only indicated by words; the rest lies deep in our conscious or unconscious life, and is the source of the tone and colour of language. Words, accordingly, must be steeped in life to be living; and as we have not two lives, but only one, so we have only one language. To the mother tongue, then, all other languages we acquire are merely subsidiary; and their chief value in the education of youth is that they help to bring into relief for us the character of our own language as a logical medium of thinking, or help us to understand it as thought, or to feel it as literary art.*

An able American scholar, profoundly realizing the dependence of solid cultivation upon the national tongue, forcibly argues that this dependence must find larger recognition in our scheme of education. The following is also somewhat abridged:

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* Prof. S. S. Laurie: Lectures on Language and Linguistic Method in the School, pp. 18, 19, second edition.

Education, he contends, is more than mental discipline; it is a process of nutrition. Mind grows by what it feeds on, and, like the body, must have suitable and appropriate nourishment. Intellect is only one function of the mind; feeling and volition are co-present and co-essential. *And these three are one mind.* The pre-eminence of literature as educative material is due to the fact that, coming as poetry especially does from the intellectual and emotional depths of creative genius, it awakens, nourishes, and calls into activity the corresponding potencies of those who are touched by its influence. Then language is the sole universal in the life of man. Language and literature are more than liberalizing, they are humanizing studies. Through the humanity in them we realize our own individual human capacities. The language and literature that best serve this end are our own. Consequently, the vernacular is the beginning and the end of a liberal education. The Greeks, to whom we owe our ideal of culture, knew no language but their own; but the minds of Greek schoolboys were steeped in their own noble literature. For our youth the essential and indispensable element in a generous culture is the English language and literature. But the best results in the teaching of English in high schools can not be secured without the aid given by the study of some other language, which, in the opinion of all experts, should be Latin or a modern tongue. This re-enforces the humanistic starting-point, which is of the utmost importance. From the vernacular as a centre the entire scheme of secondary education must be, and in due time will be, evolved.*

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* Dr. J. G. Schurman: The School Review, vol. ii., pp. 93, 94.

CHAPTER IV.

THE WORK OF THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL.

When a child first reaches the schoolhouse, say at the age of six years, he has already acquired two invaluable mental possessions. These are:—

1. A store of facts, ideas, and images—that is, of knowledge; or, to speak in terms of power rather than of attainment, the child has reached a certain stage of mental growth or expansion; he has a certain procreative mental power.

2. A store of language capable of expressing measurably these ideas, facts, and images; or, to adopt the other form of expression, the child is able to clothe the children of his mind in an appropriate garb of speech.

These two facts stand in a certain relation to each other; they are in a sense only aspects of one and the same fact, as was stated in general terms in the last chapter. As a rule, however, mental power is in excess of linguistic power. Professor Preyer declares that "the newborn human being brings with him into the world far more intellect than talent for language," * and it is probable that, as a rule, intellect maintains this primitive advantage. Just as the child's physical strength is in excess of his power to walk until he has found his legs, so his intellectual strength is in excess of his power to talk

* The Development of the Intellect, p. 33.

until he has found his tongue. Both walking and talking are habits or arts to be acquired. While it is true, as the writer just quoted says, that it was not language which generated the intellect, but rather the intellect which invented speech, it is still true that practically the two elements are inseparably connected, and thus either element may be roughly measured in terms of the other.

The two main facts now stated are the roots from which the child's school culture is to spring. The teacher, as she meets the new pupil at the schoolroom door, faces therefore a twofold work.

1. She must strive to enlarge and clarify the child's mental store, rendering his ideas, facts, and thoughts more precise and definite, as well as more full and varied. She is to enlarge the quantity and improve the quality of what the child knows; or, to speak in terms of power again, she is to stimulate and direct the growth or expansion of his mind. Under this head the teaching of all studies, or subjects proper, falls, no matter what their names or character.

2. She must put him in possession of the elementary school arts, as previously explained—what are sometimes called the instrumental studies. In particular—and for our purpose this is the main point—she must strive to enlarge and improve his language; enlarge it by expanding his vocabulary, improve it by rendering his use of language more clear and definite. This requirement will include not merely oral speech, but also reading and composition, or all the language-arts. Professor Laurie says our business as educators is to give to the child's "words definite and clear significations, and to help the child in adding to his stock; for, in adding to his stock of understood words, we add to his stock of understood things,

and, consequently, to his material for thought and the growth of the fabric of his mind." *

The earnest teacher who assays this two-sided task is at once confronted by the question of method. Under either head she asks, "Where shall I begin?" and "How shall I proceed?" These questions she can not intelligently answer until she has carefully studied the child's previous mental life. Entering upon such study, she encounters new questions, viz., "How has the child acquired the knowledge that he possesses already?" and "How has he learned the language that he habitually uses in the expression of his thought and feeling?" The answers to these questions will determine in a general way, for the time being, the method of the school; for the very obvious reason that, unless the school preserves the essential continuity of the child's mental life, it will fail to accomplish its object. As the child *has been* learning, whether knowledge or language, so in the main must he *continue* to learn. This is the method of Nature. Answers to our two questions will furnish matter for the two ensuing chapters. First, however, an additional observation.

Closely connected as thought and language are, either one may be developed somewhat in disproportion to the other. This fact is popularly recognised in such expressions as that "A knows more than he can tell," while "B can tell more than he knows." The wise teacher will not fall into the very common mistake of neglecting either of the two elements. Good teaching of subject-matter enlarges the use of language, and good teaching of language enlarges subject-matter. In teaching reading a mistake has sometimes been made. Two little attention has been paid to thought-material and too much

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* Page 29.

attention to words and expression. At the present time there is, in some quarters, a tendency to slight the arts of expression and, relatively, to exaggerate thought-material. In the unfolding of the mind intellect precedes language, as we have seen; but language reacts upon intellect to such an extent that its large cultivation is essential to large mental growth. To cultivate expression is to cultivate mind. In the elementary school the two lines of work should be co-ordinate. To neglect either is to go counter to the teachings of psychology, and to court failure in the end.

NOTE.—Prof. Laurie, in the first edition of his Lectures on Language and Linguistic Method in the School (page 23), after remarking that the child's range of language up to the eighth year is very small, said that he was probably confined to not more than 150 words. In the second edition (page 28) he makes the number not more than 200 or 300 words. Even the second number is no doubt too small. Mr. Albert Salisbury, of the State Normal School, Whitewater, Wisconsin, reports a child that at the age of thirty-two months had by actual count a vocabulary of 642 words, and at the age of five and a half years a vocabulary of 1,529 words. The two vocabularies are as follows at the two periods, distributed with reference to parts of speech: Nouns, 350 and 885; pronouns, 24 and 22; verbs, 150 and 321; adjectives, 60 and 236; adverbs, 32 and 40; prepositions, 17 and 20; conjunctions, 4 and 5; interjections, 5 and 1; participles and inflected forms in general except pronouns were not counted. "It will be observed," says Mr. Salisbury, "that, with an apparent shrinkage in his use of pronouns and interjections, there was an immense increase in his use of nouns and adjectives, verbs coming third in the order of the increase." Of the second list he says, further, that it was composed of words not merely understood, but of words actually and spontaneously used by the child, and that it certainly underestimated his working vocabulary.—(Educational Review, March, 1894, pp. 289, 290.)

Prof. Max Müller states, on the authority of an English country clergyman, that some of the labourers in his parish had not 300 words in their vocabulary; that the vocabulary of the ancient

sages of Egypt, as far as it is known from the hieroglyphic inscriptions, amounts to about 685 words; that the *libretto* of an Italian opera seldom displays a greater variety; that a well-educated person in England, who has been at a public school and at the university, who reads his Bible, his Shakespeare, the Times, and all the books of Mudie's Library, seldom uses more than about 3,000 or 4,000 words in actual conversation; that accurate thinkers and close reasoners, who wait until they find the word that exactly fits their meaning, employ a larger stock; and that eloquent speakers may rise to a command of 10,000. "Shakespeare, who displayed a greater variety of expression than probably any writer in any language, produced all his plays with about 15,000 words. Milton's works are built up with 8,000; and the Old Testament says all that it has to say with 5,642 words."—(The Science of Language, pp. 266, 267.) "But a contributor to Cassell's Saturday Journal," says the London Daily News, "has been at considerable pains to check these (Müller's) theories, and the conclusion that he arrives at is that the figures given are too small. Farm hands, he finds, are able to name all the common objects of the farm, and to do this involves the use of more than the entire number of 300 words allotted to them. Then, by going through a dictionary, and excluding compound words or words not in pretty constant use, he found that there were under the letter 's' alone 1,018 words that are to be found in ordinary people's vocabulary. It would be nearer the truth, we are told, to say that the agricultural labourer uses 1,500 more, and that intelligent farm hands and artisans command 4,000 words, while educated people have at call from 8,000 to 10,000. Journalists are credited with 12,000."

CHAPTER V.

THE ORIGIN OF THE CHILD'S KNOWLEDGE.

With all their divergencies of view, the psychologists are happily agreed on the one fundamental question of the origin and nature of our earliest knowledge. Let us run over the principal facts that are to be considered in studying that subject.

The first of these facts is the mind. The mind is capable of activity, of self-activity, and this is its characteristic attribute; through activity it grows, increases, enlarges; furthermore, while the mind is one and has no parts, it is capable of acting in several different spheres, or of having a variety of experiences, and, through these activities and experiences, its powers or faculties are developed. This enlargement or increase of the mind we name education. Still another fact in relation to the mind is that it grows *only* through its own activity. Once more, the mind can not act, and so can not enlarge or become educated, if it is left isolated. Its primal activity is dependent absolutely upon something external to itself. Accordingly, the second fundamental fact in knowing is some object or thing other than mind. In general we may call this Nature. It is Nature that first sets the mind in motion, and so incites its growth or education; it is Nature that first stimulates us to know, to feel, and to choose. Afterward the mind's own states and affec-

tions act in the same way; but this comes only in the period of introspection or self-consciousness, and does not lie within the scope of the present survey. But, thirdly, Nature and the mind must be in relation one to the other. Until real contact is established, there is no mental activity and so no knowledge or education; but the moment it is established activity begins, and knowledge and education take their rise. Knowledge is, in fact, nothing but a relation between the knowing power and the known object. Properly speaking, it has no existence outside of the mind; it is a continuing state of mind; that is, if minds should cease to know, knowledge would cease to exist. We do indeed assign to knowledge an objective existence, as when we speak of the knowledge that is stored up in books and libraries. With that phase of the subject we shall deal hereafter; here it is sufficient to say that what books and libraries do really contain is the symbols of knowledge—mere transcripts or copies of the world or of the mind as the authors of books have seen the world and mind—and that they are meaningless until they are converted into reality by the reader's own activity. Letters and books to a child, or to an illiterate person, are nothing but things, like stocks and stones.

The education of the human race began with the establishment of contact between mind on the one side and the facts of Nature and of society on the other. The direct contact of mind with mind is also involved. This primal knowledge and discipline was soon re-enforced from another source. As soon as men began to observe, to think, and remember—that is, to accumulate experience—they began to impart what they had learned to one another. They began to communicate. Parents in particular communicated to their children. In the primal sense of the word that was the beginning, not

strictly of education, but of teaching. One generation told what it knew to the generation following. Thus arose tradition, the oral delivery from man to man and from age to age of a store of accumulated experience; tradition, which has exerted, and still exerts, an incalculable influence upon the affairs of men. It is a channel of communication, a means of teaching. It does not stand for first-hand or original knowledge, but for second-hand or derivative knowledge; or, to put the thought in another form, what one learns in this way he does not know through the exercise of his own faculties of observation and reflection, but through the exercise of the faculties of reception and retention. The establishment of contact between men's minds and this second form of knowledge was the second step in the education of the race. However, this relation can not be artificial or mechanical, but must be real and vital, as before. It is as necessary for one to use his mind in order to understand what another has seen, heard, or thought, as it is to understand things at first hand, and often even more necessary. The medium of tradition is oral language, assisted by signs and gestures; and this brings us back again, and from a new angle, to the relation that exists between language and mental cultivation.

The foregoing survey covers the whole field of race education previous to the invention of some kind of writing—either pictures, words, or letters. There has been some discussion of the question how far the individual repeats the history of the race. He certainly takes, and in the same order, all the steps that have been enumerated. The boy of six years of age has a store of ideas that may be grouped as follows:—

1. Ideas of the natural world about him, or of sense-objects. These ideas are simple, particular, concrete,

and have been formed by the familiar processes of sense-perception. Furthermore, as children differ in natural environment, so they differ in ideas. The mental store of the city boy differs from that of the country boy.

2. Ideas of the social world. These ideas also are simple and concrete, formed by sense-perception. They are ideas both of persons and of acts, and they are dependent upon environment, as before.

These two groups of ideas are the first that the child forms, and they condition all his later knowledge. He forms them himself, at first hand; for in this sphere all that the parent, nurse, or other person can do for the child, at first, is merely to bring facts into relation to his senses, which forms a sort of rudimentary teaching. In a true sense, therefore, the child is an original investigator of the world about him, prying into it with all the organs at his command.

3. Abstract or general ideas. These are notions or concepts, pale and shadowy indeed, but still the germs of all scientific thought. Concept-making is later than percept-making, but follows close upon it. Here are brought into play not merely observation, but analysis, comparison, abstraction, and generalization. The child learns the difference between "mamma" and "woman," and the use of the plural number; he enters into the sphere of relations that distinguish, in simple cases, cause and effect. These general ideas relate to the social sphere as well as to Nature; for, notwithstanding their greater abstractness, the normally trained child early begins to form the notions conveyed by the words "command," "rule," "law," "authority," "control," and "government." Although not self-conscious, the normal child, long before he reaches the schoolhouse, has learned the use of "I" and "me," or has learned to discriminate between himself and the world about him.

4. Judgments and inferences. Judgment or comparison is involved in the formation of both percepts and concepts, and also of inferences. Still, it is proper to mention them particularly as constituting thinking proper. Professor Preyer's boy was twenty-three months old when he uttered his first spoken judgment, *Heiss*—that is, "This food is too hot." Add inference to judgment, and you have reasoned knowledge.

In his first thinking, the child uses only the materials furnished by perception. The first subject-matter upon which he exercises his faculties comes from his own experience. His concepts, judgments, and inferences are in this respect strictly limited. He can not, in fact, be taught to think any more than he can be taught to see, to hear, or to smell. All that can be done for him in this regard must be indirect. A normal mind, when it comes into relation with an appropriate object, perceives or thinks, just as spontaneously as a normal finger smarts when thrust into the flame of a lamp. At first the mental processes are not volitional, but automatic; afterward, the will appears, and finally assumes definite control of the regulated mind. The child is an original thinker, as he is an original observer. With slight change of words, what Emerson says of Nature is equally true of society: "Nature is a discipline of the understanding in intellectual truths. Our dealing with sensible objects is a constant exercise in the necessary lessons of difference, of likeness, of order, of being and seeming, of progressive arrangement; of ascent from particular to general; of combination to one end of manifold forces. . . . What tedious training, day after day, year after year, never ending, to form the common sense." *

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* Nature, chap. v.

Still, too much emphasis is often placed on the sense-elements—at least, in the more advanced stages of education. It is not at all necessary for each man to repeat in all particulars the experience of the race. To do so, under existing conditions, is, in fact, impossible; but even if it were possible, such a procedure would involve great loss of time and energy. The current maxim, "Never teach the child anything that he can find out himself," contains as much error as truth. In respect to many things, Roger Ascham's observation, "Learning teacheth more in one year than experience in twenty," is just as true as the converse would be in respect to other things. At first, all the elements of knowledge are sense-elements, concrete and particular; on these our earliest use of language rests, and they form the basis of all our knowledge; but as the child ascends the educational ladder, the abstract, the general, and the ideal elements will become more and more prominent.

The present purpose is not to inventory the child's ideas on his arrival at the school, but only to classify them. To inventory them would be impossible, since his knowledge is a variable quantity. His mind already acts in every sphere in which it is capable of acting, but with different degrees of power. His perceptive knowledge far exceeds his reflective knowledge; the field that he has made most thoroughly his own is the material world, and after that the social world. The value of what he has already acquired can not be overestimated, meagre as it may seem; for this knowledge, through apperception, will exercise the profoundest influence upon his whole future life. Still further, these first steps in the path of knowledge are as difficult as they are important. We take these steps when we are too young either to appreciate their difficulty or to remember them. However, observation of

the child-life must convince us that they are the shortest as well as the most difficult steps that we ever take in the path of knowledge.

5. But the enumeration of the sources of knowledge is not yet complete. The child of six has been brought into contact with the stream of tradition as well as with Nature and the social world. A parent teaches his child through explanations, descriptions, and stories, as well as by putting sense-objects and his own conduct or behaviour in the child's way. This verbal or secondary knowledge the child receives by the help of his primal or original knowledge. The ideas, images, and thoughts that he has formed by using his mind on real objects interpret to him the ideas, images, and thoughts conveyed by words. At first a word or sentence is nothing more to him than any other sound. Time, or rather experience, makes the word or sentence significant, and experience only. The cultivation that comes from Nature and man must precede the cultivation that comes from spoken language as well as the cultivation that comes from books and literature.

Here our survey may close; for it will be better to deal with the book when the child enters the schoolhouse. And still the remark may be added that no attempt has been made sharply to discriminate time-relations in the sequence of the child's knowledge. It is enough for the teacher to know that when the child reaches the school his knowledge is rapidly increasing and his mind growing in all the ways and directions that have been enumerated.

CHAPTER VI.

THE ORIGIN OF THE CHILD'S LANGUAGE.

As previously stated, the second duty of the teacher is to enlarge and improve the child's use of language; enlarge it by expanding his vocabulary, and improve it by rendering his use of words more clear, definite, and precise. Neither of these things can the teacher accomplish without paying good heed to the steps by which the child's speech has been formed. For thorough investigation of the subject, physiologically and psychologically, the reader is referred to the appropriate sources; an outline only is called for in this place.

At birth a child has an instinctive vocal utterance, which is constantly enlarged by exercise. "There is the same spontaneous apprenticeship," says M. Taine, "for cries as for movements. The progress of the vocal organs goes on just like that of the limbs; the child learns to emit such or such a sound as it learns to turn its head or its eyes—that is to say, by gropings and constant attempts." * The infant's first instinctive utterances are purely reflexive, and mean no more than the quiver of a nerve or the contraction of a muscle; of thought, they are as devoid as the gurgling of water when it issues from the bung of a barrel. Still, these utterances are the raw

* On the Acquisition of Language by Children, Mind, vol. ii, p. 252.

materials of speech, as sense-impressions are the raw materials of ideas. They are not language save in the most indefinite sense, but they are a contribution that heredity makes to the formation of language. They are correlated with physical states; thus, a live coal dropped on an infant's hand will cause it not only to move its hand, but also to cry out. So far the human infant does not differ from the brute infant, except that it has a greater range of utterance.

In due time the infant begins to use his voice to express mental states. By experience he learns that certain sounds which he hears convey meanings, and in the same way he learns to make sounds in order to convey his own meanings. He signals that he is in pain, or that he is in want of food. Slowly but surely vocal utterance becomes correlated with perception, judgment, feeling, and desire. It is at this stage that the will enters the field of activity. "Every expression of thought," says Mr. Tracy, "whether it be word or mark or gesture, is the result of an active will, and as such may be classed among movements."* Still, the first volitional expressions do not appear to be significant; they are mere vocal experiments. By this time consonants have been added to vowels, and sounds have become articulate. The result at twelve months of age in the child whom he observed, M. Taine called "twittering." "She takes delight in her twitter like a bird, she seems to smile with joy over it, but as yet it is only the twittering of a bird, for she attaches no meaning to the sounds she utters. She has learned only the materials of language."† Even more, the first words that are uttered are meaningless; they are not associated with any object

* The Psychology of Childhood, p. 115, second edition.

† Mind, vol. ii, p. 252.

that marks the advent of proper language; so that the child's first word, which is hailed with so much interest by fond parents, brothers, and sisters, is important as a promise rather than as an achievement.

The next step is the use of words with meanings. With the expression of ideas, feelings, and wants in articulate words, proper language begins. Here the human infant parts company for good with the brute infant. The oaths of poor Poll, being purely mechanical, are not accounted profanity. From this time on the knowledge and the language of the normal child in general march together *pari passu;* knowledge advancing to the furthest reach of thought and the loftiest creations of the imagination, language advancing to the fit expression of all that thought can think or imagination picture. Here we are brought back again to the correlation of the two factors. The child's mental development is measured approximately by the rapidity of his progress toward a skilful manipulation of the instruments of expression; on the other hand, thought itself attains to generality through the aid of language.

Such, in outline, appears to be the process by which the instinctive vocal utterance of the infant is transformed into the vernacular speech of the youth and the adult. Still, this transformation would never be effected without the intervention of agents yet to be mentioned. These must be enumerated.

The first of these agents is instinctive mimicry; the child unconsciously imitates the sounds that he hears.

The second agent is conscious mimicry; the child intentionally imitates or reproduces sounds that he has heard. Imitation begins before the child has made discovery of the fact that sounds convey meanings, and it is accelerated when that discovery is made. Just as the

discovery of the uses of walking re-enforces the child's disposition to use his legs that results from the pleasure of activity, so the discovery of the significance of sounds stimulates the desire to make them. The process of correlating states of mind and sounds, as words, is a slow one, but it is greatly facilitated by the pleasure that the child finds in mere vocal experimentation. It may also be observed that the difficulty of making this correlation—that is, of associating meanings with sounds—has a moral as well as an intellectual bearing.*

Imitation explains the utterance of words by the child without meaning. It is a habit that the child begins, and that the adult, with less excuse, continues. M. Taine wrote of the child that he studied, when she was about fifteen months old: "'Papa' was pronounced for more than a fortnight unintentionally and without meaning, as a mere twitter, an easy and amusing articulation. It was

* This point is thus touched by Jean Paul in a passage quoted by Radestock (Habit, page 84): "In the first five years our children say no true word and no lying one; they only talk. Their speaking is a loud thinking; but as often one half of the thought is Yes and the other No, and they, unlike us, utter both; they appear to lie, while they only speak to themselves. Furthermore, they enjoy playing with the art of speech new to them; thus they often speak nonsense, only to listen to their own knowledge of language." This may be somewhat exaggerated, but is true in the main. We are so in the habit of attributing ethical significance to language, that it is hard for us to appreciate the difficulty with which that association is practically established. At first the child has no more idea of telling the truth with his tongue than he has of telling it with his eyelids or toes. As Jean Paul says, the organs of speech are things to play with like the other organs of the body. The idea that there is a special relation existing between speech and veracity, that by our words we are justified and by our own words condemned, comes with the development of speech and of the moral sense.

later that the association between the word and the image or perception of the object was fixed, that the image or perception of her father called to her lips the sound *papa*, that the word uttered by another definitely and regularly called up in her the remembrance, image, expectation of, and search for, her father. There was an insensible transition from the one state to the other, which it is difficult to unravel. The first state still returns at certain times, though the second is established; she still sometimes plays with the sound, though she understands its meaning." *

Father, mother, sister, brother, nurse, and other members of the child's social circle act upon the child in two ways, unconsciously and consciously; in both ways they set him copies or models and constantly stimulate his activity. Thus the members of the family become his teachers; commonly they are as anxious to teach as the child is to learn; but, whether anxious to teach or not, they do teach constantly, both by setting copies and by furnishing stimulus to talk. "Baby say so!" with an appropriate illustration, is a constant exhortation that answers both purposes.

Instinctive vocal utterance is the first contribution, and the power of imitation the second contribution, that Nature makes to speech. Given instinctive utterance, it is imitation that makes speech education possible.

"It is obvious at a glance," says Mr. Tracy, "that speech is a product of the conjoint operation of these two factors: *heredity* and *education*. If, on the one hand, we observe the initial babbling of the infant, and notice its marvellous flexibility, and the enormous variety of its intonations and inflections—and this at an age so early as

* Mind, vol. ii, p. 254.

to preclude observation and imitation of others,—it will be apparent that the child has come into the world already possessing a considerable portion of the equipment by which he shall in after-years give expression to his feelings and thoughts. If, on the other hand, we carefully observe him during the first two years of his life, and note how the intonations, and afterward the words, of those by whom he is surrounded are given back by him—at first unconsciously, but afterwards with intention —and how, when conscious imitation has once set in, it plays thenceforth the predominating rôle, we shall readily believe that, without this second factor, but little progress would be made toward speech acquirement." *

Nature, then, supplies the instinctive tendency and capacity to speak, and also the power that moulds the mind and the vocal organs according to the conventional standard of speech. At what time the child begins to perceive that sounds convey meanings, and accordingly tries to talk, it is hard to say, but mere love of imitation is an earlier impulse.†

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* The Psychology of Childhood, p. 116.

† Mr. Darwin says the sounds uttered by birds offer in several aspects the nearest analogy to language; all the members of the same species utter the same instinctive cries expressive of their emotions; and all the kinds that have the power of singing exert this power instinctively; but the actual song, and even the call-notes, are learned from their parents or foster-parents. These sounds are no more innate than language is in man. The first attempt to sing may be compared to the imperfect endeavour in a child to babble. The young males continue practising for ten or eleven months. Their first essays show hardly a rudiment of the future song; but as they grow older we can perceive what they are aiming at; and at last they are said "to sing their song round." Nestlings that have learned the songs of a distant species, as with the canary birds educated in the Tyrol, teach and transmit

Let it be remembered that in the early process of speech education imitation is the master agent, indeed the sole agent. It determines (1) whether the child shall talk like a man, howl like a wolf, growl like a bear, or bark like a dog; (2) whether he shall speak the English, the French, or some other language; and (3) whether he shall speak this language with purity and propriety, or with dialectical, provincial, or family peculiarities of form, pronunciation, or accent. The boy was right who gave as a reason for drawling his words, "Mother—drawls —hern." The normal child who is accustomed to good English and nothing else, uses good English. The man who "talks like a book" is the man who has been moulded by book language. Thus, a man's language is a measure of the company he has kept, as well as of himself. His speech shows the quality of his home and his social surroundings. Perhaps a child has an inherited tendency to the language of his country or his family, as the German to German, the Frenchman to French, but if such be the fact imitation easily overcomes the tendency. Speech, therefore, is eminently a social phenomenon. "Language is *possible* in all normal children," says Mr. Tracy; "it becomes *actual* only in the presence of a companion. But given the companion, and scarcely any limit can be set to the possibilities of development."* However, the companionship must be a real one. The reason why the child born deaf is also born mute is not because he is destitute of instinctive utterance, but be-

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their new song to their offspring. The slight natural differences of song in the same species inhabiting different districts may be appositely compared to provincial dialects; and the songs of allied though distinct species may be compared with the language of distant races of men.—The Descent of Man, vol. i, pp. 53, 54.

* The Psychology of Childhood, p. 118.

cause he can not imitate sounds; when he does learn to talk, if ever, it is by watching and imitating the motions of another's lips.

In this analysis we have found no trace of rule or formal method. As far as we have gone, neither rule nor method has played any part whatever in the process. In learning to talk, the child receives much correction, but no precepts. He follows example or copy: use and wont do the work. While it is impossible nicely to assign to either kind of imitation its own due effect, we hazard nothing in saying that we constantly tend to underestimate the unconsciousness or instinctive element.

Accordingly, the child's vernacular speech results from the training of an instinctive function. It grows with his growth and strengthens with his strength. It is part and parcel of his mind and character, and perhaps of his physical organization. It is woven into the very texture of his being. It is his linguistic integument, fitting him as nicely as his skin. Moreover, it must be expanded and renovated in a way similar to that in which it was formed. One can not lay off his linguistic habit and put on another that is more to his liking, as he may a coat. He must grow it off, as the stag grows off his horns; slough it, as the snake sloughs his skin. And yet, as we shall see hereafter, criticism will facilitate the process.

NOTE.—The ancients clearly saw the function of imitation in education. Plato devotes much space to the subject, discussing the office of imitation in dancing, language, music, painting, science, literary style, and in the formation of the character itself (Laws, ii, 655, 668; Cratylus, 423, 426, 427; Republic, iii, 393, 394). Xenophon also lays stress upon imitation, holding virtually that it is the most effective way to teach children behaviour and manners (Cyropædia, i, 2). Aristotle discusses the relation of mimesis to art (Rhetoric, i, 11; Politics, i, 1, 23). Aristotle also enjoins the

directors of education to be careful what tales or stories children hear, and also to see that they are left as little as possible with slaves (Politics, vii, 17). The Greeks were very particular about the language that their children acquired through personal contact with others (see Mahaffy: Old Greek Education, p. 13). Plutarch, in his well-known essay entitled Of the Training of Children, urges that the companions of children shall be well bred and shall speak plain, natural Greek, "lest, being constantly used to converse with persons of a barbarous language and evil manners, they receive corrupt tinctures from them. For it is a true proverb 'that if you live with a lame man you will learn to halt.'" Of all the writers of antiquity who touch the subject of education, Quintilian most abounds in practical thoughts. He understood perfectly the part that imitation plays in the language-arts. He laid stress upon the function of the nurse. Before all things let the talk of the child's nurse not be ungrammatical. To the morals of nurses, doubtless, attention should first be paid; "but let them also speak with propriety. It is they that the child will hear first; it is their words that he will try to form by imitation. We are by nature most tenacious of what we have imbibed in our infant years, as the flavour with which you scent vessels when new remains in them; nor can the colours of wool, for which its plain whiteness has been exchanged, be effaced; and those very habits which are of a more objectionable nature adhere with the greater tenacity; for good ones are easily changed for the worse, but when will you change bad ones into the good? Let the child not be accustomed, therefore, even while he is yet an infant, to phraseology which must be unlearned."—(Institutes of Oratory, i, 1, 15, Watson's translation). As to the parents, Quintilian would by all means have them persons of learning; as to the playfellows and companions of young gentlemen, he made the same recommendations as concerning nurses. The Roman professor fully recognised the fact that correction and criticism were second to imitation.

Roger Ascham says:—

"Imitation is a facultie to expresse liuelie and perfitelie that example: which ye go about to follow. And of it selfe, it is large and wide: for all the workes of nature, in a manner be examples for arte to follow.

"But to our purpose, all languages, both learned and mother tonges, be gotten, and gotten onlie by imitation. For as ye vse to

heare, so ye learne to speake: if ye heare no other, ye speake not your selfe: and whome ye onlie heare, of them ye onlie learne.

"And, therefore, if ye would speake as the best and wisest do, ye must be conuersant, where the best and wisest are: but if you be borne or brought up in a rude countrie, ye shall not chose but speake rudelie: the rudest man of all knoweth this to be trewe."—(The Scholemaster.)

CHAPTER VII.

THE LANGUAGE–ARTS IN THE LOWER GRADES.

To adopt Professor Laurie's admirable analysis, language may be studied under three aspects, as follows :—

1. As the substance of thought. This means the content or meaning of language, and relates, of course, to its characteristic function. This aspect of language is universal, but there is no particular study that deals with it.

2. As the form of thought. This means the reflexive study of language; the study, not of the substance that the language conveys as a vehicle, but of the vehicle itself. This aspect of language is called grammar, and its educational value will be explained hereafter.

3. As an art. This means literature as such, or literary art. There is no formal study that is coextensive with this aspect of language, but it is included in æsthetics, or what Lord Kames called "criticism." Here we deal with the ideal elements of language.

Thus language is a real study, a formal study, and an art study. As "*substance* of thought," says Laurie, "language instructs and fills the mind of youth with the words of wisdom, with the material of knowledge, and guides it to the meaning and motives of a rational existence, and while doing all this it at the same time trains the intelligence : as a *formal* study, it further disciplines the intelligence, and gives vigour and discriminative force to intellectual

operations in all the relations of the human mind to things, and therefore to the conduct of life: as *literature*, . . . language cultivates, by opening the mind to a perception of the beautiful in form and the ideal in thought and action. It does this by bringing the prosaic truths of goodness and duty into the sphere of the idea, and so evoking and directing those aspirations, inherent in reason, which find their highest expression in spiritual realities." *

It will be seen that literature, properly so called, is something wholly different from the grammatical structure of language, and in great part different also from its concrete substance. Literature and language, or rather literature and printed language, are by no means coextensive. This third aspect of the subject, the æsthetic one, will claim our attention in a later chapter.

Now, it is perfectly evident that in the first stage of school life the child can do nothing with language as the form of thought or as beauty of expression. He can not enter upon grammar or upon literary art. But with language as substance of thought, or reality, he can deal, provided this substance is properly handled. He can not, indeed, be expected at first to receive new knowledge or new ideas from the printed page. For the time his strength is mainly absorbed in the technical elements of reading; he can do nothing more on the thought side than to associate old ideas with their printed symbols; and so some time must elapse before reading can become to him a source of real knowledge. He may all the time be adding, and should all the time be adding, to his real knowledge through direct contact with thought-material; his studies of things and his study of the art of reading should

* Language and Linguistic Method, p. 96.

be as closely connected as possible; but it still remains true that, at this stage of progress, reading itself, or reading proper, is not a source of such knowledge. The teacher must take the child where she finds him in respect to both mental and language power, and seek to develop him in both directions. The principal methods or devices that may be employed will now be enumerated.

1. The first means to be employed by the teacher is conversations with the class on suitable subjects suggested by the incidents of everyday life in school and out of school. The pupils should be encouraged to engage freely in these conversations, encouraged to reproduce their own observation and experience. While the language used by the teacher should be somewhat in advance of that habitually used by the class, it should yet be within their comprehension. Judgment and tact will prevent the introduction of improper subjects.*

2. The second means is tales and stories in prose and

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* How potent a means of education communication is, Lord Bacon suggests in his essay entitled Of Friendship. "Certain it is," he says, "that whosoever hath his mind fraught with many thoughts, his wits and understanding do clarify and break up, in the communicating and discoursing with another: he tosseth his thoughts more easily; he marshaleth them more orderly; he seeth how they look when they are turned into words; finally, he waxeth wiser than himself; and that more by an hour's discourse than by a day's meditation. It was well said by Themistocles to the King of Persia, that speech was like cloth of Arras, opened and put abroad; whereby the imagery doth appear in figure; whereas in thoughts they lie but as in packs. Neither is this second fruit of friendship, in opening the understanding, restrained only to such friends as are able to give a man counsel (they, indeed, are best): but even without that, a man learneth of himself, and bringeth his own thoughts to light, and whetteth his wits as against a stone, which itself cuts not. In a word, a man were better relate himself to a statua or picture than to suffer his thoughts to pass in smother."

verse. At first the teacher should herself tell or read the stories and tales; then make them the subject of conversation, requiring the pupils to reproduce them in their own words as fully as possible. Fairyland may be drawn upon as well as history, travel, and biography. To those educationists who object that fairy tales are fictitious, and that only the real should be taught, Professor Laurie replies that "the imagination of little children is very active in the sphere of the possible and impossible; that this normal activity of the imagination contributes largely to the growth, culture, and enrichment of mind; and that it has to be taken advantage of by the educator who respects law wherever he finds it." "Where would Homer and Sophocles have been," he asks, "had they not imbibed mythological lore with their mother's milk? Even the genius of Shakespeare would have perished in the thirsty desert of a childhood of bare facts." He further affirms that "what applies to children applies *a fortiori* to the adult; and that fiction, the drama, and art ought, in consistency, to be excluded from all life by those who would deny the unreal to children. It might also be shown . . . that in the active imaginations of children and their appreciation of fairy stories, we see at work, in a rudimentary way, the capacity for the ideals of art and religion."* There is reason to think that at present we tend to make the education of the child too matter-of-fact, too scientific, forgetting that the child has imagination and emotion as well as logical faculties. What could be better than the following from Mr. Lowell?—

"I am glad to see that what the understanding would stigmatize as useless is coming back into books written for children, which at one time threatened to become more

* Lectures on Language and Linguistic Method, pp. 29, 30.

and more drearily practical and didactic. The fairies are permitted once more to imprint their rings on the tender sward of the child's fancy, and it is the child's fancy that often lives obscurely on to minister solace to the lonelier and less sociable mind of the man. Our nature resents the closing up of the windows on its emotional and imaginative side, and revenges itself as it can. . . . In a last analysis it may be said that it is to the sense of Wonder that all literature of the Fancy and of the Imagination appeals. I am told that this sense is the survival in us of some savage ancestor of the age of flint. If so, I am thankful to him for his longevity, or his transmitted nature, whichever it may be. But I have my own suspicion sometimes that the true age of flint is before and not behind us, an age hardening itself more and more to those subtle influences which ransom our lives from the captivity of the actual, from that dungeon whose warder is the Giant Despair. Yet I am consoled by thinking that the siege of Troy will be remembered when those of Vicksburg and Paris are forgotten. One of the old dramatists, Thoms Heywood, has, without meaning it, set down for us the uses of the poets:

> "'They cover us with counsel to defend us
> From storms without; they polish us within
> With learning, knowledge, arts, and disciplines;
> All that is naught and vicious they sweep from us
> Like dust and cobwebs; our rooms concealed
> Hang with the costliest hangings 'bout the walls
> Emblems and beauteous symbols pictured round.'" *

3. At this stage of progress object lessons are a useful mode of teaching language as well as of teaching sensible qualities. The method is to make objects subjects of conversation. It is well to keep in mind the historical

* The Old English Dramatists, pp. 131, 132.

steps by which knowledge advances. We must remember that education had not only begun, but made considerable advancement, before the invention of letters; that men's minds were first formed through contact with the natural world and with one another; that what the individual accumulated, he delivered by word of mouth to others; that for long the oral teacher was the only teacher; that memory, left dependent upon itself, performed miracles, and that tradition became a great instrument of cultivation. Books and printing have changed all this to a great extent. Relying upon books as we do, and accustomed as we are to associate ignorance and incapacity with illiteracy, we find difficulty in appreciating the heights to which men have sometimes attained who were strangers to the printed page. "The Hebrew patriarchs had small libraries, I think, if any," says the Autocrat; "yet they represent to our imaginations a very complete idea of manhood; and, I think, if we could ask in Abraham to dine with us men of letters next Saturday, we should feel honoured by his company." It is important to remember the sources of the primitive culture of the race, for they are still the sources of the first culture of the individual. Letters did not abolish our natural senses and mental faculties, although they have, most unfortunately, sometimes promoted their decay.

4. The reading lessons are a most important agency in language teaching. These should be well discussed and understood by the pupils. While the readers used in the school should meet the child nearly on his own level, intellectual and linguistic, they should also tend to enlarge his knowledge and his vocabulary; they should point upward. This important subject will not be more fully discussed here, since it will be made the subject of a separate chapter.

5. Selections of poetry should be committed to memory to be recited, to be sung, to be made the subject of conversation. This exercise may be conducted on a generous scale; it will confer some knowledge, but especially will it develop and refine the vocabulary, provided the selections are properly made. Furthermore, it will develop taste. Beautiful poems committed to memory in childhood will be a perennial wellspring of cultivation and delight. Nor is it necessary, or even advisable perhaps, that the pupil should understand all the passages that he learns. At this point persons who overestimate the intellectual elements of education commit a mistake. Passages that are but faintly understood, may strongly move the imagination and mould the feelings. Who that leads an intellectual life does not every now and then, for the first time, really see into some passage which he committed to memory in childhood? *

6. The last agent to be mentioned is written exercises. Sentences, stanzas, and short paragraphs should be copied. At the beginning the slate or loose pieces of paper may be used, but afterward a book should be provided for the purpose. The exercise may be copied from the blackboard or a book, or may be taken down from the teacher's dictation. These exercises, though simple, should always contain a thought of value to the child. A few simple rules should be furnished by the teacher and be strictly insisted upon—such, for example, as these: "The sentence should always begin with a capital letter." "Proper names should begin with a capital." "The completed sentence

* Sir Walter Scott understood this matter much better than some schoolmasters. "Children," he wrote, "derive impulses of a powerful and important kind from hearing things that they can not entirely comprehend. It is a mistake to write down to their understandings. Set them on the scent, and let them puzzle it out."

should be marked by the period or the question mark." The pupil will have no difficulty, in plain cases, in distinguishing between the sentence that says something and the question that asks something. Such exercises as these teach spelling, penmanship, and expression all at the same time.

But more than this. The pupils should compose original exercises from the very beginning. The first sentences should not differ from the corresponding oral ones, save in the employment of written language in the room of oral language. At first ideas should be furnished or suggested, as well as the subject itself; afterward only the subject or topic, while the pupil is left to supply ideas and words. At a still later stage of progress the pupil should be thrown wholly upon his own resources, leaving him to find subject, ideas, and language. Such exercises naturally connect themselves with object lessons, as the primary books devoted to language lessons amply illustrate. These original sentences are the germ of the future theme or essay.

The foregoing suggestions of method should be accompanied by several remarks.

First, as has been intimated, these suggestions have more value than at first appears. The words "language" and "literature" are far from exhausting their value. For example, it is through stories and tales that German teachers lay the foundation of that admirable work in history which is the praise of the German schools. The Herbart-Ziller school of pedagogists, who lay such great stress upon history, say instruction should begin at the beginning of school life. Holding that the child's love for stories is the first awakening of his mind to historic interest, they make it their first endeavour to stimulate this love by systematic story-telling. The art

of telling a story they regard as the final test of a teacher's skill, and they assign it a prominent place in normal school instruction. Still further, they have worked out a primary programme in accordance with their pedagogical scheme. They have arranged a number of Grimm's tales, which they make the centre of instruction for the first school year. These stories are told and retold by the teacher, reproduced item by item by the children, and around them are clustered moral and religious sentiments, material information, and illustrative object lessons. The next year, connected stories from Robinson Crusoe are treated in the same manner. Then come selected tales from the Old Testament, and still later selections from the Odyssey, the Norse Sagas, Shakespeare, Herodotus, Livy, Xenophon, and others in due order. In this way the historical sense is developed and centres of interest created before technical instruction begins.*

The poems that are committed to memory should be selected with reference to their ethical value. President Eliot, of Harvard University, expresses a common experience when he says, "I hold in my memory bits of poetry, learned in childhood, which have stood me in good stead through life in the struggle to keep true to just ideals of love and duty." The old poet George Herbert is right:

"A verse may find him who a sermon flies."

Properly managed, instruction in the language-arts develops the historical, the ethical, and the literary sense, as well as power to think and power to express thought.

Secondly, association continues to work as before, but under somewhat new conditions. Here, again, are the two forms of imitation, the instinctive and the conscious,

* See the author's How to Study and Teach History, chap. v.

and the scope of their activity is increased through the enlargement of environment. The school is now added to the family and to the social circle—the school consisting of the teacher and the scholars. The last are a potent factor. "You send your boy to the schoolmaster," says Emerson, "but it is the schoolboys who educate him." Sometimes the school shows an improvement and sometimes a deterioration in the linguistic environment; but, on the average, we may believe that the new stage in child life shows improved conditions. The linguistic effect of pupil upon pupil may be likened to the moral effect. To a certain extent parents and teachers can exercise a selective influence here, as in respect to manners, morals, and general cultivation, but taking the multitude together such influence is not very great.

The third observation is that small—very small—reliance should be placed on rules, and then only in matters that are purely mechanical. "Children are not to be taught by rules which shall always be slipping out of their memories," says John Locke. "What you think it necessary for them to do, settle in them by an indispensable practice. . . . Nothing sinks so quietly and deep into men's minds as examples."

Even at the cost of what may seem unreasonable reiteration, attention must once more be drawn to the relations of thought and speech. If the doctrine heretofore advanced be true—that thought and language are practically inseparable; that the two are really but different aspects of the one subject; that growth in thought and growth in language should be promoted in the school—then the conclusion may perhaps be drawn that instruction along either line will answer in both lines. Not so; thought and language do not measure each other absolutely; and although it is true that good instruction in

either line helps in the other one, still there must be separate and distinct instruction in both lines. It is a question of emphasis; now thought will be emphasized, and then language. The common child will not pick up the elementary school arts by the way, without his own knowledge, but he must consciously learn them. He will not learn to read, write, and compose essays with power, ease, and correctness, incidentally, while giving exclusive attention or preponderant attention to something else. Thought-expression must be emphasized as well as thought-material.

From birth to death there are four agents that promote our education in vernacular language—that develop our powers of mind, and enlarge and clarify our means of expression. These agents are here enumerated in the order of their value:—

1. Association, or social relations with our fellows, including listening to cultivated speech of a formal character, as sermons, orations, and the like.

2. The reading of good literature, both in and out of school.

3. Formal instruction in the language-arts, speech, reading, and composition.

4. The scientific study of language, and particularly of one's vernacular, or grammar.

The first of these agents works in the life of the child from its birth, ceaselessly and powerfully. In no field of human activity or cultivation does imitation play a greater part than here. The second and third agents do not appear in the life of a majority of children until they go to school; and even in the minority, who have made some progress in those arts before that time, they work but feebly. Here, too, imitation asserts itself strongly. The fourth agent never becomes a practical factor in the edu-

cation of a majority of children, because they do not study grammar; while in the cases of those who do study it, it is much less effective than the other three.

At the present time there is much comment upon the bad training in English of the youth of the country, and particularly of those who come to the better colleges. There can be no question that this comment has much justification. In the search for causes of the existing state of things, and in the attempts to locate the blame, quite insufficient attention has been paid to the relatively low stage of general cultivation, including the language-arts, of the vast constituency of the schools. This statement includes pupils and teachers, because it includes the whole community. The schools are to blame, but not wholly so. Training in language, more than training in anything else, bespeaks the child's or the man's personal cultivation; and the roots of this cultivation are not reached directly by the conscious processes of the school.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE LANGUAGE-ARTS IN THE HIGHER GRADES AND IN THE HIGH SCHOOLS.

THERE can be no greater mistake in educational theory than to suppose that the child, at any given time, passes by a leap from one stage of mental development to another, and no greater mistake in educational practice than suddenly to put aside one set of agencies for another set. The child-life is a continuous evolution—enlarging indeed rapidly at times, but never so rapidly as to snap the thread of continuity. Since there is no break in the child-life at the age of eight years, there should be no break in the teacher's regimen. Changes of method and of regimen should come as gradually as the changes of the mind itself. Sameness in kind, however, does not necessitate sameness in degree. Progressively, the exercises that are continued into the second period of school life from the first one should be made more thorough and more difficult, as the child is able to bear them. Still further, the total amount of stress or emphasis may be, and should be, reapportioned or redistributed. For example, as the pupil ascends the grades less stress should be laid upon concrete facts and ideas, and more upon abstract facts and ideas. The full training of a mind demands that abstract subjects should receive due attention in their time as well as object lessons in their time.

Accordingly, the means to be employed in teaching the language-arts after the third year do not really differ in kind from those employed before that time, save in one or two particulars. In the first years of the new period that now begins all the agencies before mentioned should still be continued. Some stress must be withdrawn, as the work goes on, from the oral exercises, and be put upon the reading and writing exercises. The pupil must slowly learn how to use a book—that is, really to read; and this he will never do unless he uses books. Nothing is more destructive of good habits in the pupil than the continuous flow of the teacher's talk, no matter how good the talk may be. As the grades are passed the teacher should become less prominent in the school life, and the subjects of study, and notably the printed page, become more prominent. "For what other purpose has teaching," asks Quintilian, "than that a pupil may at last be under no necessity of being taught?"

I shall now describe in order the exercises to be employed in this more advanced stage of language-teaching.

1. The copying and dictation exercises should be continued as a rule. Sentences may be dismissed, and the stanza, the paragraph, and the poem used instead. It will be found advantageous in time to cause the pupil to transcribe considerable compositions. The benefits of such exercises are obvious. Besides being lessons in spelling, in penmanship, and in expression, they enrich the understanding, enlarge the vocabulary, and lay the foundation of style. If the pupil falls into the spirit of the piece, Imitation will at once begin to work her spell. Demosthenes, it is said, copied Thucydides's History of the Peloponnesian War six times with his own hand. But it will not do to permit such exercises to degenerate

into mere mechanical routine; they must be made fully intelligent.

2. Composing themes or essays. The most marked difference between the second period and the first one is the expansion of the constructive work. A characteristic exercise is the story, theme, or essay, which at first should be limited to the single paragraph. To bridge the chasm between the single sentences of the first grades and the formal compositions of later grades, is the hardest thing to be done in teaching composition. Here no better method can be employed than the one anciently described by Quintilian. He first recommends that those pupils who are too young to enter upon the direct study of oratory shall, in the first place, "relate orally the fables of Æsop, which follow next after the nurse's stories, in plain language, not rising at all above mediocrity, and afterwards to express the same simplicity in writing." He then recommends paraphrasing. As to the poets, let the boys take to pieces their verses, and then express them in different words; and afterwards represent them, "somewhat boldly, in a paraphrase, in which it is allowable to abbreviate or embellish certain parts, provided that the sense of the poet be preserved." He recommends also the writing of sentences, and especially of what he calls *chriæ*, which is the relation of some saying or action, and not different apparently from the "story" method so commonly found in our schools.*

It would be very unwise, however, to call the simple exercises done at the beginning of these grades essays or compositions. Professor Laurie thinks "essays" should not appear until the fourteenth year. Much depends upon a name or a definition. The fact is, if the language work

* Institutes of Oratory, i, 9, 3.

is properly graded you can not tell when the pupil writes his first essay, so insensibly will language lessons shade into essays.

3. Paraphrasing. What has already been said about oral paraphrasing is equally true of written. Much more is also to be said of both.

Professor Laurie objects to paraphrasing, which he calls "turning into commonplace language, which 'any fellow may understand,' the verses of a poet, or the succinct prose of such writers as Bacon and Browne. . . . A more detestable exercise," he says, "I do not know. It is a vile use of pen and ink. . . . To paraphrase Milton or Shakespeare," he goes on, "is to turn the good into the inferior or bad, and to degrade literature. Moreover, it is false. For the youth who has done it imagines that his sentences give all that is to be found in the original Milton or Bacon. If this were so, then there would, alas! be no such thing as literature, no such thing as art in language. When all is done, you have no longer got Bacon or Milton, but only your much lesser self." * It is interesting to observe that Roger Ascham held the same view. "It is a bold comparison indeed," he says in The Scholemaster, "to think to say better than that is best. Such turning of the best into worse is much like the turning of good wine out of a fair sweet flagon of silver into a foul, musty bottle of leather; or to turn pure gold and silver into foul brass and copper." Quintilian, however, recommended paraphrasing, very much to Ascham's disgust. To much paraphrasing the objection is perfectly valid. The object of the exercise is not, as Ascham seems to suppose, to better what is best, but rather to improve the style of the pupil. Still, there is no merit in simply marring what is beautiful. A

* Pp. 50, 51.

writer in the Saturday Review deservedly condemns the making-over of such lines as these :

> " To mute and to material things
> New life revolving summer brings ;
> The gentle call dead Nature hears,
> And in her glory reappears."

The flowers of literature are too delicate and fragile to be roughly handled. To paraphrase, for instance, Tennyson's Brook is most absurd ; the poem is ethereal, all music, and one might as well paraphrase the song of the lark. But if narrative verse is chosen, verse that has body and substance, paraphrasing is a very useful exercise, as most teachers will testify. Passages of Sir Walter Scott's poems, stories as they are and full of fire and animation, may be recommended as good material. To a degree the controversy is one about words. Even Laurie recommends what he calls " resolution " or " dialysis," which consists in the writing out of a piece of poetry in grammatical prose order, supplying words understood, but always preserving the language of the poet.

4. The imitation of chosen models. The recommendation of this practice does not mean that the pupil shall consciously copy an author's style. Such a course would destroy individuality and end in helplessness. The model should rather work *in* the pupil, and *through* him, as it will do if he really becomes absorbed in the model. The beneficial influence of great writers upon style is indirect. The stronger an author's personality, the stronger the hold that he will take of his readers and the greater will be his influence. Students of Bacon, Milton, or Shakespeare are influenced not so much directly in their thought or style as indirectly through what they absorb unconsciously. At first, nothing more can be expected than that the pupil will fall into the author's mode of express-

ing thought, which he will do if really interested. Afterward he should study authors critically. Dr. Johnson said a man who wished to write well should give his days and nights to Addison, which is sound advice, provided Addison is thought to be a proper model.

It is especially important that the teaching of the language-arts should be conducted on the intensive plan. There is a reciprocal relation between speaking and reading, while language or composition should be kept in close touch with the reading lessons, and particularly with the literature. The study of literature will furnish subjects and materials as well as models of expression. Constant care must be taken to develop literary taste, and this can be done only through constant contact with good reading matter. Rhetoric and criticism may purge the taste, but alone they never reform it any more than they form it in the first place.

5. Translation. There can be no doubt that this exercise is very beneficial to those students who carefully study a foreign language. It involves the two elements of unconscious imitation and of practice. Translation was the great reliance of Ascham in teaching Latin. He strongly advises what he called "double translations"—that is, first rendering a letter of Cicero's, for example, into English, and then translating it again into Latin. These are his words:

"Translation is easy in the beginning for the scholar, and bringeth also much learning and great judgment to the master. It is most common and most commendable of all other exercises for youth. Most common for all your constructions in grammar schools be nothing else but translations; but because they be not double translations, as I do require, they bring forth but simple and single commodity, and because also they lack the daily

use of writing, which is the only thing that breedeth deep root, both in the wit, for good understanding, and in the memory, for sure keeping of all that is learned. Most commendable also, and that by the judgment of all authors which entreat of these exercises." *

Still, it is a mistake to teach the second language in school in the early grades. It leads to confusion and weakness; what is gained in the foreign tongue is lost in the mother tongue. On this point Professor Laurie's remarks quoted on a previous page may be again cited. Still, I must not fail to remark that it is very desirable for those children who are expected to study one or more languages at some time to take up the second one before the high school is reached.

The foregoing suggestions cover in general the whole field of language work up to the high school; indeed, properly expanded, they include the high school also. Some of them are of principal or exclusive application in lower grades, some in upper grades. To consider the grades, one by one, with reference to the specific kind of work that should be done in each, would not be in harmony with the plan of this work; nor is it thought to be necessary, especially as reading and composition will be made the subject of discussion in future chapters.

To the foregoing methods of instruction two others should be added that will find their main application and use in the high school.

The first of these is the study of etymologies. The derivation of words is not always a safe guide to their meaning. Language is often illogical. This is particularly true of the technical terms of science. "'Hydrogen' and 'oxygen,' 'meiocene' and 'pleiocene,'" says Mr.

* Book II, Translation.

Marsh, "are modern compounds of Greek roots, but, however familiar their radicals, these terms would no more explain themselves to the intelligence of a Greek than to an unlettered Englishman." The meanings of such words must be sought in dictionaries and works of science. "We can not learn all words," Mr. Marsh proceeds, "through other words. There is a large and rapidly increasing part of all modern vocabularies, which can be comprehended only by the observation of Nature, scientific experiment, in short by the study of things." *

We can, however, learn many words through other words. Often a clear idea of a common radical will illuminate a whole family of words. The student who sees that Latin *prendere* means *to seize* or *grasp* gets a firmer hold of "comprehend" and of "apprehend," and of the two large families of words of which these are members. A limited number of nouns and verbs, combined with a few prepositions, have given us a large part of our working vocabulary. "Example," "exemplification," "ensample," "sample," and the like, all go back to *exemplum*, and this again to the verb *eximere*. "Instruction," "construction," "destruction," differ only in the three different prepositions that form the first syllables. We seem to have a clearer view of the helplessness of the baby when we think of him as the "infant," the not-speaking one. A "fable" should be anything that is told, and a "legend" anything that is read, rather than what they are at present. The Roman *virtus* was courage, and the use of the word in its present sense suggests the high valuation that has been attached to that virtue. An aristocracy should be a government of the best. "Sincerity" and "cerement" are alike in this, that the root of each is *cera*, meaning wax.

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* Lectures on the English Language, p. 84.

"Trivialities" are the unconsidered matters that men are apt to exchange at the crossings of the way or road. These examples are all drawn from the Latin side of the English speech. The composition of Saxon words is often equally interesting. Consider the families of words derived from the names of the members of the body, hand, foot, head, and mouth. Not everybody has thought that "nosegay" is a compound of the two familiar words that compose it. Whether much time is given to the roots or not, prefixes and suffixes should be a subject of study in all schools above the lower grades.

Word-building often adds new force to the meaning of words. It gives new clearness to the pupil's ideas; it increases his resources of expression; and, not least, it creates a habit of observation and analysis that adds materially to the interest and value of language. While it is most beneficial to students who have studied a second language, and particularly Latin, its benefits are not confined to them. It is therefore highly important that all teachers of language should turn the attention of their pupils to the study of etymology.

The other line of study referred to is the history of words, or not so much the history *of* words as the history that is *in* words. "Words," Emerson says, "are fossil poetry." They are fossil history as well. They register opinions, states of society, political facts, the progress of ideas. The word "pagan" informs us that in the Roman Empire the villagers, *pagani*, clung to the old religion when the dwellers in cities had accepted Christianity. The word "heathen" points to a similar relation between the heathmen and the townsmen in Saxon England. "Rustic" and "urban" mark the contrast between country and town in manners. Politics, as the word shows, originated in the city (πόλις). "Jewsharp" and

"tenpenny" nail have each a history. With what eager interest the reader having a smattering of philology, reads the conversation between Wamba and Gurth in Ivanhoe that brings out the historical significance of *swine* and *pork*, *ox* and *beef*, *calf* and *veal*, *sheep* and *mutton!* The first word of each pair is Saxon, the second Norman, showing, as Wamba says, that the animal is Saxon when he requires tendance, and takes a Norman name when he becomes a matter of enjoyment. Scott uses these etymologies to illustrate how little the Normans had left to the Saxons; while the finest and the fattest were for the Norman board, the loveliest for the Norman couch, the best and bravest for the Norman host. The history of Europe is largely written in its languages, and the geographical nomenclature of America tells of races and tribes that have passed or are passing away. "Mountains and streams," it has been said, "still murmur the voices of nations long since denationalized or extirpated."

It goes without saying that the science of language has come to be an important source of historical information, but its effect on the course of history itself has not been as fully recognised. "The new theory of language," says Sir H. S. Maine, "has unquestionably produced a new theory of race. . . . To this theory of race," he adds, "we owe, at all events in part, the vast development of German nationality; and we certainly owe to it the pretensions of the Russian Empire to at least a presidency over all Slavonic communities." Panslavism has been called "philological sentiment." The learned writer might, with equal propriety, have mentioned the part that the new race theory played in the unification of Italy.

The interest and value of such studies as these are found mainly in discipline and in culture. And yet, whatever makes language more significant, more vivid,

more picturesque, enhances its value as an instrument of thought. Study of the etymology and history of words in schools should be encouraged. Such study may be entered upon in a tentative manner before the high school is reached. Sneer as scientific philologists may at Trench's Study of Words, that book has quickened the linguistic interest of many minds; and were it brought up to the front of the latest scholarship, retaining its popular character, it would still be a good book to put on the table of every teacher of English in the country.

A further word may well be said about one of the topics treated above. The translation that helps the pupil in his English is the actual transference of thought from good Latin or German into good English. The mere matching of words is of little value. Idiomatic English is what is wanted. Moreover, translation is accompanied by a double difficulty: the pupil is called upon to grasp the thought of the writer contained in a foreign language, and then to express this thought in his own language. In many cases either one of these efforts taxes his ability severely, and frequently overtaxes it. The more remote the passage from his own habitual mental life, the sorer the trial. The vehicle is new and the burden that it carries heavy. A frequent result is that translations are accepted which, in respect to English, would not for a moment be tolerated as original compositions. Accordingly, this is a point to be watched, lest the Latin or German lesson undoes the English lesson.

CHAPTER IX.

THE ART OF READING.

As we have seen, the first mental cultivation of the race originated in its contact with the external world, material and social; the second, in its contact with the experience of the living or the dead communicated by oral tradition. The third came with the invention of writing and the production of books. These steps every individual repeats in the same order.

"With the art of writing," says Carlyle, "of which printing is a simple, an inevitable, and comparatively insignificant corollary, the true reign of miracles for mankind commenced. . . . All things were altered for men: all modes of important work of men—teaching, preaching, governing, and all else." He contrasts the university of the thirteenth century with the university of the nineteenth—the one a place of listening, the other of reading. "If we think of it," he continues, "all that a university or final highest school can do for us is still but what the first school began doing—teach us to *read*." And again, "The true university of these days is a collection of books."* It is true that Carlyle wrote this celebrated passage before the day of laboratory methods; but if he were living now, it is not probable that he would care to change a word of it. There is, indeed, a long-standing controversy

* The Hero as Man of Letters.

about things and words as instruments of education—realism and verbalism. Some children take the third step in education before coming to school; all pay, or should pay, much attention to things after reaching it; still the book gives to the school, and particularly to the elementary school, its character, and reading is, and will continue to be, the first and greatest of the elementary school arts. The ancient Jews significantly called the school "the house of the book." We are now to see what its use involves.

The relation of the author to his composition is that of a creator to his creature, or of a father to his child. According to the Greek conception, the poet is the "maker" (ποιητής), and such also, in a less eminent degree perhaps, is the prose writer.* Some part of an author's knowledge, thought, feeling, or purpose—one or all of these; that is, some part of the author himself—flows into his work. This is the sense of the word "author." Mr. Lowell once said that the Greek classics are rammed with life, and so in some degree is all literature worthy of the name. The author is like Jesus in the miracle—virtue goes out of him. But the life or virtue is inert and powerless so long as the book lies unused on the shelf. As Dr. Holmes calls him, the librarian is the sexton of the alcoved tomb—

"Where souls in leathern cerements lie."

The function of the reader is different from that of the author, and is yet like it. He takes up a dead composition and makes it live again. He recreates, if he does not create. He evokes from the printed page what the writer put into it. He restores the writer, so far as he put himself into his work. He reanimates the souls that

* In Elizabethan English "maker" is the current term for poet, and "make" for writing verses.

lie in leathern cerements. When he brings out of a composition bearing one of those names all the Shakespeare, Bacon, or Tennyson that it holds, he reads it, and not until then. Mark Pattison says the scholar is greater than his books. The result of his labours is not so many thousand pages of folio, but himself. The Paradise Lost is a grand poem, but how much grander was the living soul who spoke it! Philosophy is not a doctrine, but a method. Philosophical systems as put upon paper do not embody philosophy. Philosophy perishes in the moment you would teach it. Knowledge is not the thing known, but the mental effort which knows. And so it is with learning.* But there is another point of view. Imperfect as they are, books are the best expression of the minds that have produced them. If Milton falls below his own level in Paradise Lost, he rises again in the Miltonic reader. And while philosophy may perish in the act of teaching, and knowledge cease to be in the act of transmission, they reappear in the disciple as the power that philosophizes and the activity that knows. Reading, to be sure, is relative, not absolute. A child's reading of Shakespeare is one thing, Coleridge's quite another.

In a previous chapter we have seen that knowledge is purely subjective; that if all minds were to perish, knowledge would cease to exist, even if all the existing symbols of knowledge, books and libraries included, should survive. These books and libraries would be like the old parrot mentioned by Humboldt, which spoke the language of a savage tribe that had ceased to exist. It is only in a secondary sense that there is knowledge in a book. What a book contains is not properly ideas, not properly even words, which are the signs of ideas, but merely the symbols

* Isaac Casaubon, pp. 488, 489.

of words, the external and visible *simulacra* of thought; and it is only when a mind like the mind of the author is brought into relation with it that the book becomes instinct with meaning. A book may be likened to a phonograph, which speaks or sings only to an ear like the ear of him who first spoke the speech or sung the song.

In his essay on Goethe's Helena, Carlyle shows how the reader becomes one with the author. "We have not *read* an author till we have seen his object, whatever it may be, as *he* saw it. Is it a matter of reasoning, and has he reasoned stupidly and falsely? We should understand the circumstances which, to his mind, made it seem true, or persuaded him to write it, knowing that it was not so. In any other way we do him injustice if we judge him. Is it of poetry? His words are so many symbols, to which we ourselves must furnish the interpretation; or they remain, as in all prosaic minds the words of poetry ever do, a dead letter: indications they are, barren in themselves, but by following which we also may reach, or approach, that Hill of Vision where the poet stood, beholding the glorious scene which it is the purport of his poem to show others."

Writing and reading are correlative arts; either implies the other. When one stops to think of it, he begins to appreciate the greatness of the triumph that they involve. With a few strokes of his pen, the author transmits his thought around the world, or to a distant age. Through the printed page, the reader comes into relation with the men who have rammed the literatures with life. "It is the greatest invention that man has ever made," says Carlyle, "this of marking down the thought that is in him by written characters. It is a kind of second speech, almost as marvellous as the first." It is not strange that a people so full of filial piety as the Chinese should reverence lettered paper.

While reading is the latest born of the great instruments of cultivation, it is in some ways the most important of all. Björnson makes the mother of the hero of The Happy Boy say to her son that once the mountain spoke to the stream, the stream to the river, the river to the sea, and the sea to the sky, the sky to the clouds, the clouds to the trees, the trees to the grass, the grass to the flies, the flies to the animals, the animals to the children, the children to the grown-up people, and so on. Finally, she begins to teach him to read. He had owned books for a long time, and often wondered how it would seem when they also began to talk. Mr. Scudder uses the story to emphasize what he calls "the crisis of our educational system." This crisis is learning to read. "In making it possible for him [the child] to read books, we have added enormously to the power of the teacher. . . Of all times in the child's life when this company of invisible spirits may be called in as interpreters, there is none more significant, more impressive than this, when, standing on the threshold, wondering, listening, his imagination sensitive to the finer influences, he waits to hear what his books shall say to him when they begin to talk." *

* The Atlantic Monthly, February, 1894, p. 254: The Educational Law of Reading and Writing.

CHAPTER X.

READING AND MENTAL CULTIVATION.

School studies proper may be divided into three groups, the divisions being based on use or function. We must sketch out these groups, and also show the relation of reading to each one of them.

1. The guidance studies furnish us with information or knowledge that is of immediate practical value in the work of life. This knowledge shapes, or at least influences, our conduct. The terms "guidance" and "conduct," however, must not be taken in a narrow sense. They must not be used in a merely moral acceptation, but in the sense of universal activity. In kind the knowledge that is derived from these studies is the same as the useful or practical information that is gathered by personal observation and reflection, by conversation, by reading the newspapers and books of general information. It has an encyclopædic character, and has been called "fact lore." Indeed, information has sometimes been regarded, but very mistakenly, as the same thing as education.

Extended remarks are not needed to show that the art of reading is very closely connected with this group of studies. It is well known to all teachers that in dealing with this whole group the good readers greatly surpass the poor ones. Teachers have often remarked to me, "My pupils are poor in geography and history be-

cause they can not read." It is the same way in physiology and elementary science, for in these studies the end sought is not so much mental discipline as it is information and the cultivation of the observing habit. In these studies the good readers surpass the poor ones, partly because they commonly surpass them in observation and apprehension, and partly because they surpass them in the art of reading itself. The mental qualities that cause a pupil to excel as a reader also cause him to excel in the information studies. As Bacon says, conference makes a ready man, writing an exact man, reading a full man.

2. The disciplinary studies stimulate the observing and thinking faculties to action, and so develop the mind. They are sometimes called the "training studies." They tend to create thought rather than merely to furnish facts or ideas. As the studies of the first group give the mind knowledge, so these give it power. While the relation of reading to the disciplinary studies is less close than to the information studies, it is still important.

Poor readers sometimes do good work in physics, chemistry, and mathematics, while good readers more frequently do poor work in the same studies; but in both instances the rule is the other way. Pupils often come short in arithmetic or algebra because they have never formed the habit of carefully reading their examples, problems, and theorems. With such pupils it is sometimes an advantage to cause them to analyze grammatically their lessons. The close relations of reading to the study of language, particularly on the literary side, are perfectly obvious. The mental qualities that make the good reader tend also to make the good translator. Poor readers rarely make good progress in the study of languages. Grammar will be made the subject of a future chapter, but a single phase of it may be mentioned here. Grammat-

ical analysis rests on logical analysis, on actually thinking an author's thoughts, and what is this but a form of reading? Silent reading in interpreting to the mind the language-elements as they stand on the page,—words, phrases, clauses, and sentences; oral reading adds to this the vocal expression that enables the listener to repeat the same process. The basic element in both cases is a ceaseless process of defining, interpreting, and construing. The similarity between oral reading and analysis is even closer: the reader indicates the subject and the predicate of the sentence, as well as their modifiers, by the intonations, emphasis, and slides of his voice; the grammarian formally points out these elements by giving them their grammatical names. Reading is rapid analysis without the formal designation of the elements; analysis is slow reading with such designation. Still, all good readers do not excel in formal grammar; some who have the literary faculty lack the logical power that analysis calls for.

3. The culture studies supply tilth to the mind. The principal ones are the arts. Language as art is literature, a culture study. The difference between reading and the study of literature is partly one of kind, but mainly one of degree. The teacher of reading in the lower grades places more emphasis upon the mechanical or technical elements of the art than upon its spiritual elements; in the higher grades, less emphasis upon the mechanical and more upon the spiritual; while the teacher of literature gives principal attention to the spiritual elements. Manifestly these are steps in the same line of development. Progressively, the art of reading passes into the study of literature. A school reader is a book of literature, as well as a practice book for teaching an art. A reader of high grade contains, or should contain, a variety of matter—descriptions of natural objects, elevated oratory, sublime,

tragical, and comic pieces, wise reasoning, humour, wit, pathos, poetic interpretation of Nature and scientific interpretation, history, food for the intellect and food for the heart, as well as tonic for the will. Fully to appreciate such a book calls for larger mental attainments than all the other books of the elementary school put together; to render its lessons well is the highest test of school culture; thoroughly to know its contents, next to association with a good teacher and cultivated pupils, is contact with the best formative influence of the school. The reader is pre-eminently the character-making and the taste-making book. It is the queen book of the elementary schoolroom.

Of course, this division of studies, or any other one that can be propounded, lies open to criticism. The broadest of these criticisms is that the groups overlap one another. Information, disciplinary, and culture elements are found in every one of the three groups of studies—nay, in every study. As in other cases of classification, the names go with the emphatic characters. The distinction of information and disciplinary studies in particular needs to be guarded. A man's knowledge and his discipline are not convertible terms, still less his knowledge and his education; at the same time there is no knowledge that does not bring discipline, and no discipline apart from knowledge.

While the above classification exhausts the school studies, it does not exhaust the sources of mental growth and culture. The mind is enriched from sources that do not bear the name of studies. Literature is one, conversation another. In respect to language, in particular, literature is very powerful. Imitation begins to exercise its potent spell the moment that the child begins to read a book with real interest. But imitation by no means exhausts the influence of either literature or association.

Imitation is at best a sort of copying, like the printing of a photograph; but here we deal with a force that works from within and affects the whole mental being. A conversation or a book, entering into a child's mind, brings new knowledge, incites thought and feeling, and enlarges the vocabulary and refines modes of speech. The introduction of new ideas, images, and feelings engenders new thought power and imparts new forms of expression. Speech grows and is clarified along with thought. The new spirit pushes off old modes and forms, as the spring sap causes the dead leaves to fall from the tree. The process is none the less efficacious because it is silent and somewhat slow. Use and wont do indeed create habits of speech that are almost incapable of change; but, at the same time, reading and conversation renew a person's speech as waste and repair renew his skin. And it was this process of renewal that I referred to when, in a previous chapter, I spoke of growing off or sloughing one's linguistic integument.

It is not easy to exaggerate the linguistic influence of the books that have obtained a currency as wide as the language in which they are written, such as Milton, Bunyan, Shakespeare, and, above all, King James's Bible. The influence of a few great models such as these, thoroughly read, is a hundredfold greater than that of all the grammars, dictionaries, rhetorics, and language books ever written. Reference has already been made to the potent influence of the school reader. It may be more than doubtful whether, with our habit of wide and careless reading, we are not at a disadvantage in respect to speech compared with our ancestors, who read more narrowly but more intensely. The newspaper is by no means an unmixed blessing, while there is reason to question whether the higher school readers of to-day are equal in a literary

point of view to those that were formerly in use. "We are apt," says Lowell, "to wonder at the scholarship of the men of three centuries ago, and at a certain dignity of phrase that characterizes them. They were scholars because they did not read so many things as we. They had fewer books, but these were of the best. Their speech was noble because they lunched with Plutarch and supped with Plato." *

The primary teacher's first duty is to enlarge and clarify the child's mental store, rendering his facts, ideas, and thoughts more precise and definite, as well as more full and varied; her second duty—and this begins at the same time and runs parallel with the former one—is to enlarge and clarify his vocabulary, adding to his stock of words and sharpening and guiding the senses in which he uses them. First and last the teacher's great instrument in the accomplishment of these ends is reading. The intelligent teacher will therefore hasten to lay hold of this great instrument of power. She will hasten to teach the pupil the art of reading; she will strive to create within him a love of reading, and also to form a discriminating taste or judgment that is capable of separating what is worth reading from what is not. The public schools of the United States cost the people not less than one hundred and seventy million dollars annually, but they would earn the money if they measurably accomplished the three ends just stated, although they should do nothing more, viz., teach the children how to read and what to read, and give them a love of reading. Unfortunately, the difference between literature and printed matter is not always understood. I should remark, however, that the relation of the reading habit to the intellectual and moral life is not

* Literary and Political Addresses: Books and Libraries.

here emphasized so much as its relation to linguistic cultivation. As a linguistic agent it ranks far above both the study of grammar and the technical devices of the schoolroom; it stands next to association itself—is, indeed, a form of association; and is undoubtedly the most powerful linguistic agent that the teacher can use. It is too much to expect that the common person, habituated from birth to bad English, will ever learn to use the best English, but the ardent reader may accomplish wonders in that direction.

What has been said of environment and good reading is of universal application. They are the two great methods of teaching language. Neither one is peculiar to the schoolroom. No matter what a child's primal force may be, or what his acquired or inherited culture, he needs the discipline and the cultivation that come from good company and good books. But the books must be graduated to the pupil and must be wisely handled.

It is pertinent to observe that in England, at least at the universities, the words "read" and "reading" are used in a much broader sense than in the United States. To study is *to read*. The hard student is the hard *reader*. A difficult subject is hard *reading*. This broader usage marks the essential oneness of what we tend to divide. We do, indeed, say that a student *reads* law or theology, but this is no doubt due to the fact that under the old *régime* lawyers obtained their education in lawyers' offices, and ministers their theological training in pastors' studies. The introduction of the broader English usage into our schools might prove to be an advantage.

NOTE.—In an admirable paragraph Mr. Lowell considers the question, "What the mere ability to read means." It is "the key which admits us to the whole world of thought and fancy and imagination," "to the company of saint and sage, of the wisest and

wittiest at their wisest and wittiest moment"; "it enables us to see with the keenest eyes, hear with the finest ears, and listen to the sweetest voices of all time"; "it annihilates time and space for us," and revives the age of wonder without a miracle. "We often hear of people," he says, "who will descend to any servility, submit to any insult, for the sake of getting themselves or their children into what is euphemistically called good society. Did it ever occur to them that there is a select society of all the centuries to which they and theirs can be admitted for the asking—a society, too, which will not involve them in ruinous waste of time and health and faculties?"—(Books and Libraries.)

Prof. Norton is equally happy when he says: "Poetry is one of the most efficient means of education of the moral sentiment, as well as of the intelligence. It is the source of the best culture. A man may know all science and yet remain uneducated. But let him truly possess himself of the work of any one of the great poets, and, no matter what else he may fail to know, he is not without education.

"The field of good literature is so vast that there is something in it for every intelligence. But the field of bad literature is not less broad, and is likely to be preferred by the common, uncultivated taste. To make good reading more attractive than bad, to give right direction to the choice, the growing intelligence of the child should be nourished with selected portions of the best literature, the virtue of which has been approved by long consent. These selections, besides merit in point of literary form, should possess as general human interest as possible, and should be specially chosen with reference to the culture of the imagination.

"The imagination is the supreme intellectual faculty, and yet it is of all the one which receives least attention in our common systems of education. The reason is not far to seek. The imagination is of all the faculties the most difficult to control, it is most elusive of all, the most far-reaching in its relations, the rarest in its full power. But upon its healthy development depend not only the sound exercise of the faculties of observation and judgment, but also the command of the reason, the control of the will, and the quickening and growth of the moral sympathies. The means for its culture which good reading affords is the most generally available and one of the most efficient."—(Preface to the Heart of Oak Books, Second Book.)

CHAPTER XI.

REQUISITES FOR READING.

In order that one may read in the sense that we have defined reading, he must possess three different qualifications, viz. :—

1. He must have a mental preparation—intellectual, emotional, and volitional—such as will enable him to receive the knowledge, feeling, and purpose with which the composition that he reads is charged.

2. He must be master of the mechanism or machinery of the printed page; he must know the power and use, both singly and in combination, of the characters that are used in the expression or symbolism of written or printed thought.

3. He must have a vocal or an elocutionary training that will enable him to convey to others by means of his voice what he himself finds on the printed page. Here it is that reading forms a connection with the earlier art of speaking.

The first of these requisites is general and spiritual; the second and third are special and mechanical. The first one sums up the whole of the reader's mental cultivation, the other two constitute the technique, or the art, of reading. For silent reading, of course, only the first and second are necessary; for oral reading the third is equally essential.

Properly to teach reading due attention must be paid

to every one of these three requirements: To mental preparation in respect to subject-matter, to the apparatus of points, letters, words, and sentences, and to vocal drill or expression. While it would be too much to say that teachers as a class understand fully the second and third of these canons, they certainly understand them better than they do the first one. Some fail to understand what reading is; they appear to assume that it is the mere play of the vocal organs, the simple utterance of language. Chinese youth, for example, in the first period of school life, commit to memory, and learn to recite with faultless utterance, The Five Classics and The Four Books, from which, as the oral and literary languages of the country are wholly different, they do not receive a glimmer of an idea. Later they are taught the literary language; but in this first period, according to the purely mechanical conception, they are the most accomplished readers in the world.

Unfortunately, the relation of the art of reading to mental cultivation as a whole is not always understood. It is an effect as well as a cause of such cultivation. We learn in order to read, as well as read in order to learn. No man's knowledge ever began, or ever will begin, with reading. Before we ever read a word we have accumulated, by the use of the senses and by reflection, a stock of facts, ideas, and images without which we could never read at all. Later in life words often come before things or ideas, but at first things must come before words. Nor can we grow in power to read unless we keep in relation constantly with the original sources of knowledge. Professor J. S. Blackie has remarked that while, in modern times, instruction is communicated by means of books, and while they are very useful helps to knowledge, and even to the practice of useful arts, still they are never the

primary and natural sources of culture, and their virtue is apt to be overrated. They are not creative powers in any sense; they are merely helps, instruments, or tools, and even as tools they are artificial, superadded to those with which the wise prevision of Nature has equipped us. "The original and proper sources of knowledge are not books, but life, experience, personal thinking, feeling, and acting. When a man starts with these, books can fill up many gaps, correct much that is inaccurate, and extend much that is inadequate; but, without living experience to work on, books are like rain and sunshine fallen on unbroken soil." Hence the Scotch professor urges his young readers to cultivate the direct observation of facts, and not to be content with cultivating books. * It is indeed to be said that words in themselves are things as much as material objects, and that as such they may be made the subject of study, but this is apart from their primitive function as signs of ideas and as vehicles of thought.

After all that has been said and written, teachers do not yet sufficiently appreciate the bearing of what we already know upon what we have yet to learn. At first the mind looks at objects directly and impartially; there intervenes between it and its object no medium or prism of ideas or previous mental experience; so that there is a native innocency of the mind as well as of the eye. But this virgin state of mind does not last long. The first-formed ideas condition all later ones. They become types, forms, or *cadres* to which new objects are referred. "For wherever it is at all possible," as has been said, "the child refers the new to the related older ideas. With the aid of familiar perceptions, he appropriates that which is foreign

* Self-Culture: The Culture of the Intellect.

to him, and conquers with the arms of apperception the outer world which assails his senses."* Thus the child reared up in the south brought north may call snowflakes butterflies, while any child for a period calls every man a papa, every woman a mamma. When the Romans first saw elephants they called them Lucanian oxen. The word *Handschuh* shows that the Germans clothed their feet before they did their hands. Old ideas affect new ones in two ways—they facilitate their formation and also shape them. Nothing but fuller experience can correct the hasty and overwide generalizations that are so characteristic of young and immature minds. But, on the whole, the resulting advantages are very great; we may even say that they measure all gain or increase of mental power. Thus it is that, other things being equal, those who know most already are the best fitted to learn. The people who saw most at the Columbian Exposition were the people who carried most to it. The Eskimos of the story found nothing to interest them in the streets of London.† Apperception conditions all mental growth after the first beginning is made, and so is of universal value; but there are reasons why the fact should be especially borne in mind when the immediate source or channel of knowledge is a book.

We have already seen that, to a degree, the reader must have one life with the author; that he must be able measurably to think his thoughts, feel his emotions, and will his purposes. He need not stand on as high a plane as the author, but he must not fall too far below him.

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* Lange, Anpereeption, p. 55, Boston, 1803.

† For examples of apperception, see Tracy, The Psychology of Childhood, p. 45; Taine, The Acquisition of Language by Children, Mind, vol. ii, p. 255; Lange, Apperception (Boston, 1893), pp. 55, 56; De Garmo, The Essentials of Method, p. 30.

No one can really read Shakespeare or Milton unless he he have something Shakespearian or Miltonic in him. School readers must be graduated to the culture of the pupils who are to use them; they must be above the pupils, but not too far above them, for if they abound in facts, ideas, and images that the pupils have not in mind, or their similars, the pupils will not receive much profit, although they may mechanically learn some new words or language. We read as well as reason from what we already know.

To read different authors, different compositions by the same author, or even parts of the same composition, may call for different kinds of preparation. One author or piece moves in the field of Nature; a second traverses history and literature; a third is introspective and metaphysical; a fourth combines facts, reflections, and images coming from several sources. A man whose reading and thought have lain in the channel of human affairs solely, does not find tongues in trees, sermons in stones, books in the running brooks, and good in everything. Nor will he who has dwelt only in the presence of Nature readily thread the mazes of history. Take this stanza from Tennyson:

> "The rain had fallen, the poet arose,
> He passed by the town and out of the street;
> A light wind blew from the gates of the sun,
> And waves of shadow went over the wheat."

It is hardly necessary to say that the ideas which enable one to appreciate these lines come from personal contact with Nature. It is labour lost to speak of waves of shadow on a wheat field to one who has never seen them, or something like them. Now, take the following from Macaulay:

"Milton did not strictly belong to any of the classes

which we have described. He was not a Puritan. He was not a Freethinker. He was not a Cavalier. In his character the noblest qualities of every party were combined in harmonious union. From the parliament and from the court, from the conventicle and from the Gothic cloister, from the gloomy and sepulchral circles of the Roundheads, and from the Christmas revel of the hospitable Cavalier, his nature selected and drew to itself whatever was great and good, while it rejected all the base and pernicious ingredients by which those fine elements were defiled."

This passage does not call for knowledge of Nature, but for knowledge of man; and no one can read it with appreciation without a large knowledge of English history in the seventeenth century. Who was the Puritan? who the Freethinker? who the Cavalier? What was the conventicle and what the Gothic cloister? And what were the elements, great and good, which Milton's nature selected and drew to itself from all these sources?

Gray's Elegy moves in a different sphere still. Its note is personal reflection on Nature and human life: it is marked by a sweet pensiveness.

Then what a mingling of ideas in the well-known lines of Hamlet:

> "Some say that ever 'gainst that season comes
> Wherein our Saviour's birth is celebrated,
> The bird of dawning singeth all night long;
> And then, they say, no spirit can walk abroad.
> The nights are wholesome; then no planets strike,
> No fairy takes, nor witch hath power to charm,
> So hallowed and so gracious is the time."

The import of the argument is that reading calls for a certain general culture—that man or child must read up to elevated literature, just as a musician must sing up to elevated music. Perhaps it is needless to say that the

reading in the schools falls far below this level. And not only so, what passes for reading in churches, Sunday schools, and homes is often merely naming words.

The proper preparation of the mind for reading comes from many sources—personal observation of Nature and personal contact with men, previous acquaintance with books, and reflection upon what one has seen and heard. Of all these sources Nature contributes to the child's mind the most valuable facts, ideas, and images.

> "God made the country,
> Man made the town."

Hunting for the spring flowers, chasing with the eye the shadows on the wheat, watching the flight of birds, noting the golden lustre of the grain at harvest; observing the habits of animals, wild and domestic, the qualities of physical things, the forest in summer and in winter, the clouds, and the changes of the seasons—these causes work lasting impressions in the young, and particularly in brooding minds. It is because the compilers of school readers feel this that they give so much prominence to lessons dealing with natural scenes. Moreover, we do not always sufficiently consider how much more nearly upon a level with these books the country child is than the city child, and how much better furnished he is with the apparatus required to interpret such lessons.

On the whole, when we consider how much cultivation it involves, we cease to think the remark extravagant that to read John Ruskin is a liberal education.

CHAPTER XII.

TEACHING READING AS AN ART.

We must keep clearly in mind the preparation to read that the child who has never looked into a book brings to school. First, he has a certain store of facts, ideas, and images gained by observation, reflection, and conversation, which serves to interpret to him, through the process called apperception, the new facts and ideas of the printed page—the extent and nature of this preparation depending upon the quickness of his mind, the character of his environment, natural and social, and particularly upon the cultivation of his home. Secondly, he has at command a certain store of oral language by which he both receives and conveys ideas, which preparation is also relative in both quantity and quality, being determined by the activity of his mind and the speech that he is accustomed to hear. The primary teacher's first duty is to take the child thus equipped and to teach him to read. She should be guided by the following canons:—

1. The pupil must at once attack the symbolism of the printed page. This consists of arbitrary characters combined in a great number and variety of ways. The first step toward reading is to learn to recognise these characters, both singly and in combination. This is in great part a mechanical-mental operation, in which success depends mainly upon natural quickness of mind and practice. It is an art in itself. The question of method,

it does not come in my way to discuss; the canons that I am laying down apply, no matter what method is used. There is reason to think, however, that the method is not so important as some would make it; more, probably, depends upon the skill with which it is handled than the method itself; or, at least, reading has been successfully taught according to all the methods that have been in vogue. Accordingly, the expression "singly and in combination" used above does not imply that such should be the order of procedure, but that the completed work must embrace both the items.

2. The pupil will at the same time attack the vocal values of these characters, also singly and in combination. The word or letter has a form that appeals to the eye, and a name or sound that appeals to the ear; in fact, some letters have several sounds or, in reality, several names. The form and the name are in no way related save by external association; the form does not control the sound, or *vice versa.* This also is an art; it involves the association of the sound and the form with the ability to make the sound. Both acts are in great degree mechanical. Excellence in the first implies quick observation and retentive memory, particularly memory for sounds; excellence in the second, flexible vocal organs and much practice.

Mastery of the printed symbols employed in literature, and of their vocal values, are the technical elements of the art of reading. They are to reading what technique is to music. They should advance together. Furthermore, they should receive marked emphasis in the school for some time after the child enters it, say for two or three years.

The acquirement of the elements of the art of reading may in after-years seem easy; the fact is, however, it is difficult, and it will be called easy only by those who do

not understand what it involves or who have forgotten their own early struggles. The two elements are not only to be acquired, but they are to be associated—the recognition of the symbols and the utterance of their vocal powers. Dr. Stanley Hall has thus characterized reading: "In fine, the growing agreement that there is no one and only orthodox way of teaching and learning this greatest and hardest of all the arts, in which ear, mouth, eye, and hand must each in turn train the others to automatic perfection in ways hard and easy, by devices old and new, mechanically and consciously, actively and passively, of things familiar and unknown, and by alternately resting and modulating from one set of faculties to another, secure mental unity and school economy both intellectual and material—this is a great gain and seems now secure." *

3. On the day that he enters the school the pupil should also attack the significance of the literary symbols. Originally these symbols, whether considered as forms or as sounds, had little to do with meaning; for the most part the meanings of words in any language which has reached the written stage are arbitrary. Good care must be taken that the meanings of the first words, or thought-symbols, that are used in teaching reading, shall be already familiar. No words or language should be employed the content of which the pupil does not already well understand. The thing immediately in hand is to associate the meanings and the forms of the symbols, and this must be accomplished mainly by sheer dint of practice. To this extent the act is mechanical-mental; but the meanings themselves, especially as they flow into a stream of thought, are purely psychological. This brings us back to the

* How to Teach Reading, p. 15.

original analysis. Reading involves (1) recognition of the printed symbols; (2) ability to express their sound equivalents; (3) understanding of the subject-matter. To illustrate, "cat" or "lion" as form, as sound, and as idea are distinct and separate, and nothing but convention has brought the three elements into connection. To read, therefore, one must observe the convention. Obviously, the first and second elements of the whole art may be acquired by themselves, as in the case of Chinese schoolboys; the second may fall out altogether, as in the case of the deaf-mute reader; while the third, although not essential to the second, gives to it that peculiar quality which we call expression. Nor will it be amiss to say again that the psychological element only is of the essence of reading. The emphasis laid upon the mechanical elements in the first grade, the fact that at first the reading lesson as such can not add anything to the child's real knowledge outside of the art of reading itself considered as an object —since the lessons must be strictly limited to what the child already knows—these two facts for a time throw the content of language into the background. At first, reading is psychological (properly so called) only in so far as it involves permanent associations of the three several elements, the most important associations being those between the old ideas and the corresponding word-forms. Not until reading as a mechanical-mental art has been measurably mastered—that is, not until the child has measurably learned to "read" in the accepted sense of the home and of the school—does it become an instrument or tool for the acquisition of new knowledge. To convey knowledge at first through reading, strictly speaking, is impossible. The fact is, that if all the time which is spent in teaching the pupil to read as a mere art were devoted to enlarging his real knowledge or mental store by plying

his faculties of observation with objects, and through conversation, he would know more at the end of a year of school life than he now knows. To be sure, the art itself contains objects of real knowledge, though of little value abstractly considered, and also confers discipline; still, from the point of view of real knowledge the time so spent is mainly wasted. But this waste we gladly incur, since this incomparable instrument of acquirement, when once gained, is a hundredfold compensation. Accordingly, more and more emphasis must be placed upon the content of language as the child ascends the grades, until at last the art of reading is merged in the study of literature.

It is not improbable that some will object to the minor stress laid upon the thought-element in the first stage of teaching reading. Such fail to understand that the first thing to do is to master a mechanical-mental art—they fail to see that the tool must first be fabricated before it can be used. The pupil should indeed be caused to understand the ideas that the exercise or lesson holds; but all attempts to do more, for the time, will not only fail to enlarge real knowledge, *through reading*, but will retard the formation of the art. A lesson in reading and an object-lesson may be combined in one; the child may get, in the first stage, new ideas at the same time that he acquires his art; but the new ideas come from the object-lesson and not from the reading as such. To quote Dr. Hall again:

"Children are so automatic and imitative, have such a genius for the facile acquisitions of habit, and are so easily stupefied by reasons and explanations, that some seem to learn to read and write so mechanically as to get by it no trace whatever of real mental discipline or development. The sooner all these processes are completely

mechanized, so that reading is rapid, sure, and free, the sooner the mind can attend to the subject-matter. Till then, Benecke thought reading and writing a necessary evil, and that processes so mechanical and arbitrary should be taught mechanically and arbitrarily, hoping for a time when children should be born with the spelling-mechanism innate and instinctively perfect in their brains." *

The teacher must remember that oral reading is a form of speech, or of talking, and that imitation is the key word in one as in the other. Rules should play no more part in primary reading than in talking. The teacher should not say, "Follow such a rule," but "Do so," setting an appropriate example. A poor reader is little likely to make good ones. The attempt to cause the child to follow rules will breed confusion of mind and prevent that freedom and spontaneity which are the first marks of good reading, as they are of good talking. Even the observance of punctuation marks should come by habit or practice, and should be instinctive rather than reflective and self-conscious. The rules found in Noah Webster's spelling book, "Stop at a period long enough to count six," etc., are altogether absurd. On this point Quintilian is a safe guide. "As to reading," he says, "practice alone can inform the young gentleman where he ought to take breath; where he is to lay the accent in a line; where he is to finish one period or begin another; when he is to raise or when to lower his voice, and at every turn to know when to speak quick or slow, with spirit or with softness." Upon this head he recommends one general rule in order to enable the boy to do all that has been mentioned, which is, "Let him understand what he

* How to Teach Reading, pp. 13, 14.

reads." The ease or difficulty with which children learn to read, in the real sense of the word, differs greatly with different children. Much depends upon Nature and much upon environment. Quick-witted children brought up in intelligent homes, where they hear from birth good reading and talking, will, under good tuition, learn to read almost as naturally as a thrush learns to sing. Mr. Scudder questions whether Dogberry "did not stumble upon a truth, and narrowly graze a most profound maxim," when he exclaimed, "To write and read comes by nature!"

There can be small doubt that reading aloud is much less practised in good homes now than it was formerly, when reading matter was less abundant. Conversation has been called a lost art; perhaps reading aloud is quite as much so. At all events, reading aloud in the family is almost as helpful to children learning to read as talking in the family is to children who are learning to talk. Professor Dowden remarks: "Few persons nowadays seem to feel how powerful an instrument of culture can be found in modest, intelligent, and sympathetic reading aloud." He makes a justifiable attack on "the reciter and the elocutionist," who "of late have done so much to rob us of this, which is one of the finest of the fine arts," * but says nothing about the decay of the habit of reading aloud, which is a still more observable fact, and one still more to be regretted. Professor Corson contends earnestly for the cultivation of the reading voice. Urging his favourite thesis in respect to vocal cultivation he says: "How much, the charm of beauty's powerful glance, may be heightened or reduced by the character of the voice which goes along with it! A woman with a sweet and gracious voice can exert through it in the ordinary relations of life, without even knowing it, a better influence than she could

* New Studies in Literature, pp. 431, 432.

by distributing religious tracts. The moral atmosphere of a home may be not a little due to the voice of the wife and mother. The mere memory of a voice which was toned by love and sympathy may continue to be a sweet influence long after the voice itself has been hushed in death. The influence of the voice for good or evil, in the domestic, social, and all other relations of life, can not be estimated. A voice may even have a good or bad reflex action upon its possessor." *

NOTE.—Mr. George Ticknor, when studying in Germany, wrote to his father that he was in the habit of reciting German to his teacher and of reading aloud to him in some book which required some considerable exertion of the voice. This the father, Mr. Elisha Ticknor, approved, but added these suggestions, which will bear quotation:

"It is not of so much importance for you to read aloud to a German as it is that a German should read aloud to you. Select one of the finest oratorical readers in Göttingen, whose voice is round, and full, and melodious. Place yourself twenty feet from him, if possible. Request him to select and read aloud to you a pathetic oratorical piece in German—such a piece, if possible, as will command all the powers of speech and eloquence. . . . Twenty pieces thus read to you by him, and in turn by you to him, in his tone of voice, would do you ten, twenty, yes, thirty times as much good as it would for you to read to him first, and in the common way, at common distance, and in common language. It is the tone of the voice, and the attitude of a polished German scholar, which you need to be able to read and speak German well, like a German gentleman and scholar. Do the same in Paris, in Rome, in London, and what you will hear and see otherwise at the bar, and from the pulpit, and in common conversation, without any particular exertion of your own, will be sufficient to answer all your purposes and all my expectations, which are but few, although *you* may think they are many."—(Life, Letters, and Journals of George Ticknor, vol. ii, p. 503.)

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* The Atlantic Monthly, June, 1895, p. 815. See also his Aims of Literary Study, pp. 129, 130.

CHAPTER XIII.

TEACHING READING AS THOUGHT.

THE phrase "to teach one to read," as we have seen, may express either one of two ideas. It may mean to teach a mechanical-mental art, the use of a mere tool, or it may mean the employment of this art or tool to unlock the mysteries of the printed page. While the two meanings are closely connected, they can still be separated in thought and also in practice. The second, it is hardly necessary to remark, is the higher meaning; it is the end to which all instruction in the art or mechanism of reading should be directed. When thus employed, the student's attention is no longer fixed on the mere art; the use of the tool has become mainly automatic, while the matter of the page absorbs the mind. Having in the last chapter said all I deem it necessary to say about the mechanical aspect of the subject, we must now consider the thought aspect.

And, first, much that has been said about the language-arts in general applies to reading as thought—so difficult is it, or rather impossible, to separate the two subjects. This close relationship, while it lightens the work of the teacher, rather embarrasses the writer who attempts to describe the work, making more or less repetition inevitable. The following are the points that need to be particularly observed:—

1. At the very first, teaching reading presents, or

should present, but one phase. The child can do nothing alone, and the teacher must work *with* him as well as *for* him. There is no such thing as preparation or study apart from the reading exercises, or rather everything is preparation for reading in the future. The single exercise, commonly given on the blackboard or the chart, is wholly homogeneous. Therefore, when the teacher stops everything stops. These remarks apply to the mechanical side as well as to the thought side of the subject.

2. Soon, however, the work will begin to differentiate. The first step in this direction will be the tendency to make two exercises—one preparation or study of the lesson, and the other reading it; and both will be taken under the teacher's immediate leadership. This division, begun but slowly, will in time be distinctly recognised. The preparation will include the substance of all the elements of composition—words, sentences, and paragraphs. The next step in the evolution is the student's own independent work on the lesson. Gradually he will win standing-ground, and as he does so the teacher will throw him more and more on his own resources. First will come the so-called "silent reading" of the lower primary grades, to be followed in time by the so-called "study" of the higher grades. The pupil's own independent work may sometimes follow and sometimes precede the study of the lesson in the class. This third step taken, all the forms of exercise used in teaching reading are present. Supplementary reading deals only with a special class of reading matter.

3. Independent work by the pupil involves the assignment of a lesson. Particular care must be taken that the lessons assigned shall be on the pupil's level of knowledge and language. The successive lessons will contain new words and new ideas, otherwise there will be no progress;

but any lesson is on the pupil's level in case he can rise to it with reasonable assistance from the teacher.

4. In assigning a new lesson the teacher should, as a rule, first tell the young children what it is about, and particularly if the subject is a new and unfamiliar one. More than this, she should direct attention to the difficult parts of the lesson, also, as the meaning and pronunciation of new words, and the force of particular expressions. In early lessons all new words should be put on the blackboard and be explained, both phonetically and as signs of ideas.

5. From the time that they are able to do so, pupils should be required to study their lessons in advance of the class exercise. Increasing stress must be laid on this feature of the work, as the direct participation of the teacher in the preparation of the lesson is withdrawn. There is reason to fear that many pupils, after they have made a fair beginning in reading, do not think such study necessary. They understand that they must prepare the lessons in arithmetic, grammar, geography, etc., but the reading lessons—why, that is merely so much time in the class! This is one point where the teacher will find it necessary to resist the steady pressure of the more advanced pupils. The ordinary reading exercise calls for preparation as much as any other exercise that can be named. In the words of a German writer:

"Before the child begins to read, it must know what it is going to read about. The pupil must read with attention and with interest which the teacher has excited before the reading begins. The difficulties also which would interfere with the interest must be removed beforehand. Everything most necessary to a good understanding of the subject should be explained at the outset, and not at the end when the best impressions are effaced.

The teacher must connect every new reading lesson with the sense perceptions already obtained, or with what has already been read, and thereby make it comprehensible." *

6. The teacher in the higher grades and in the high school will find it advantageous, as frequently as possible, to study a lesson with the class. Such study should occasionally be conducted on the intensive plan. Grammatical questions may be introduced, and every pains should be taken to illustrate the compositiön or passage. Observation has taught me that pupils often, if not indeed generally, fail to take full views of reading lessons. While the sentences may be understood one by one, the larger units that they compose are not grasped. If the passage is argument or reasoning, it is not thought out; if it is description, the imagination does not work out the picture. To a great extent, of course, these imperfect views are incident to the immature minds of pupils. Then short and imperfect views are due in part to the school readers. The readers are made up mainly of pieces and fragments, and the complete compositions found in them are commonly few and always short. In books prepared for early grades this is, no doubt, necessary; nor can it be wholly avoided in the more advanced books. No doubt the school reader must be a more or less chopped-up compilation; at the same time it is very desirable that the pupil shall become thoroughly familiar with complete and considerably extended compositions. The evil that the readers entail may be corrected through supplementary reading and literature. I approve the method recommended by the Conference on English to the Committee of Ten. "From the beginning of the *third year* at school, the pupil should be required to supplement his regular

* Cuttmann, quoted by Lange: Apperception, p. 210.

reading-book with other reading matter of a distinctly literary kind. At the beginning of the *seventh school year* the reading-book may be discarded, and the pupil should henceforth read literature—prose and narrative poetry in about equal parts. Complete works should usually be studied. When extracts must be resorted to, these should be long enough to possess a unity of their own, and to serve as a fair specimen of an author's style and method." *

7. Constant efforts must be made to connect the reading lesson with all other available sources of cultivation. The teacher should appeal to the pupil's own personal observation and reflection, the new ideas should be integrated with old ones, and pains be taken to unite the reading with the other studies, and particularly with history and geography. The newspaper and magazine, the cyclopædia and dictionary, and, above all, books of general literature, are invaluable helps. In other words, the teaching must be on the intensive plan. Professor Laurie remarks that "the question of method at this stage resolves itself very much into this: How shall we best use the reading lesson as a lesson in language and through language in the humanities? Here more than anywhere else the cultivation, the knowledge, the sympathy, the imagination, the educative skill of a teacher show themselves. The reading lesson is the common ground on which the true mind of master and pupil meet." † This is well said, but a question almost equally important is, How shall we best use language as a lesson in reading and through reading in the humanities?

8. Mention of the dictionary suggests another topic

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* Report of the Committee on Secondary School Studies, p. 89. Washington, 1892. † Page 32.

that demands fuller treatment, viz., definitions. Meanings of words are the keys to the printed page. Still, the study of meanings is not just the same thing as the study of definitions. It is true, paradoxical as it may appear, that a reader may grasp the thought of a passage as a whole when he can not define all the words one by one, or does not even understand them all; it is equally true that he may define and understand the words one by one and fail to grasp the whole thought. The mind may take either one of two views, both of which are harmful when carried too far: it may overlook small points in the general drift or substance of the passage, or it may be so intent on small points that it fails altogether to grasp the drift or substance.

A definition does not add to one's real knowledge unless it connects itself with something that he already knows. It must go back to some real or vital element in his mind. The growth of knowledge is a process of grafting a new fact or new idea into an old one;* the scion draws its sap, life, and growth from the stock in which it is set; and to bring a fact or an idea to a mind having no kindred fact or idea is no less futile than it would be to set a graft in a branch of a dead tree.

Further, a definition consists of two parts—the generic part and the characteristic, specific, or differencing part. Thus, a "map is a picture" (the generic part) "of the whole or a part of the earth's surface" (the characteristic). A good definition always refers the object defined to its genus, and then points out wherein it differs from other objects or species belonging to the same genus. We must have some idea of both of these parts in order to learn anything. When you tell a child that a "calabash

* "Receive with meekness the engrafted word" (James i, 21).

is a vessel made of a gourd," you add to his knowledge provided he already knows what a vessel is, and a gourd; but if he is ignorant of both these things you give him merely a new word, or if he is ignorant of one of them you merely give him half an idea.

The point just made must be carefully guarded. The small dictionaries, which give short definitions without illustrative examples, often prove snares to the feet of both pupils and teachers. Teaching definitions from the school reader may even be a harmful process. The pupil may recite his definitions glibly, when a little questioning will reveal the fact that he has committed to memory some strings of words soon to be forgotten. To define a cent as "one hundredth part of a dollar," and then a dollar as "one hundred cents," is merely to run around a small circle. Too much pains can not be taken to bring definitions into relation with real things, natural or mental, as the case may be. Mr. Marsh is right in contending that there is a large and increasing part of all modern vocabularies which can be comprehended only by the observation of Nature and scientific experiment—in short, by the study of things.

Another point may be mentioned. It is an invariable rule that, in defining a word, no form of the same word should be employed, as a verb or adjective in defining a noun. To say that creeping is "what a baby does when it creeps" is not to give a definition at all, not even a verbal one. That much of this kind of work is done in the schools, is well known to competent observers.

Words should be studied both in literature and in the dictionary. Either kind of study checks the other. One is to study the word in itself, the other *in situ*. A geological or botanical specimen in a museum is not what it is when found in Nature. The boy who said "an aver-

age is something that a hen lays an egg on," had evidently seen the word "average" in a sentence; while the boy who framed the sentence, "John came over the sea in a capillary," had evidently hunted up the word "capillary" in the dictionary. In reading, thought is obtained by successive strokes of analysis rather than by synthetic construction; the mind *breaks into* the composition, so to speak, and does not build it up from the letters, syllables, and words; and commonly the questions, What is the force of this expression? or What idea do you get from that language? are more useful than the questions, What is the meaning of this word or that one? While it would be untrue to say that the idea should always come before the word, we are not to forget that the primal order of mental growth is real knowledge before verbal knowledge.

9. The teacher should question the class about the lesson before reading it. First should come some general questions about the subject and scope of the lesson, which should never be answered in the words of the title. Then should follow more definite questions appropriate to the subject-matter: "What did John say?" "What kind of a coat did the beggar wear?" "Describe the house that the man lived in." "Give an account of the performances of the dog."

10. The teacher should frequently require of her pupils summaries of portions of the lesson, both before and after reading in the class. Also, general accounts or descriptions of the whole lesson. Oral paraphrases of selected parts will re-enforce the work in language. Such exercises show how well the lesson has been prepared and how thoroughly it is understood.

How far the teacher should go in questioning on the meaning of a reading lesson, must be determined at the

time upon the spot. Nor is it easy to determine the question then and there. If questions are unduly multiplied the exercise is slow and tedious, and pupils are discouraged; they think the teacher does not give them credit for knowing anything. On the other hand, if too few are asked, the lesson will not be understood. It is not always the case that the commonest things are the things that the child understands the best. Pupils can be found who can explain "the curfew tolls" of Gray's Elegy, who can not explain the line—

"The lowing herd winds slowly o'er the lea."

I have found pupils reading The Village Blacksmith who had no idea what the word "smithy" means. In this regard the environment and reading of the pupil are of course prime factors. Children sometimes show great unconscious ingenuity in answering questions. A pupil of my acquaintance explained the line,

"Once again his horn he wound,"

to mean that the possessor of the horn wrapped it round with yarn. I have been told by three schoolboys in succession, eleven years of age, that the firmament is a place like the poorhouse, that it is green pastures, and that it is old cider. The *mal apropos* answers to questions that constitute the material of Miss Le Row's well-known book, English as She is Taught, are perfectly characteristic of children, and they teach two important lessons. Many of these answers are naturally incident to immature minds, and must be corrected by time and experience; but others flow from bad teaching. Teachers have assumed that their pupils understand what they do not understand, and so have withheld their instruction, or they have not been clear in their instruction. Every person who is accustomed carefully to examine the contents of

pupils' minds knows how meagre, how incomplete, how confused their ideas are. In large measure children must *grow out* of their imperfect knowledge, and can not be *taught out* of it. Clearness and fulness are relative terms.

One important caution must be added. To take up so much time in *preparing* to read that little or no reading is done, is a fatal mistake, and one easily and often committed. There must be reading, and plenty of it.

Incidentally school readers have been mentioned more than once in these pages. We may recur to them in this place, for they are immediately connected both with teaching reading and teaching literature.

One point to be guarded in the compilation of a series of school readers, and particularly those for the more advanced grades, is the length and unity of the lessons, and another the literary quality of the lessons. Touching the first of these questions, again, two things should be said. One is that the practice of introducing masterpieces into the schools is a good one. The benefit attending the reading of whole compositions, and especially compositions of considerable length, is unmistakable. In this way the mind acquires a discipline in dealing with large subjects, in mastering the connections of thought, in seeing the bearings of things and the dependency of parts, which it can never gain from short or fragmentary compositions. Still, due preparation for this work must be first made. Short compositions must come before long ones. And, most fortunately, there is plenty of admirable material for the purpose. There are single poems and prose lessons, units in themselves, masterpieces in a word, which are as complete and perfect of their kind as the longer masterpieces of the language. Moreover, plenty of ma-

terial can be found in longer works; that is, complete poems and prose exercises, marked by perfect unity and artistic perfection in themselves, can be found in the pages of all the great masters of verse and prose. Take, for example, one of Scott's metrical romances or one of Shakespeare's plays. There will then always be need of collections of such material, selected and arranged with reference to the needs of the child and of the school. While we welcome the large use that teachers are coming to make of the masterpiece, we need have no fear or hope that it is going to put the readers out of the schoolhouse.

The other point is that to compile good school readers requires peculiar taste and judgment, as well as practical knowledge of the necessities of the school. The English Conference before mentioned made these sound recommendations, which are, however, of wider scope than the topic immediately before us: That reading books should be of a literary character; that in teaching reading no attempt should be made to teach physics, science, or natural history; and that sentimental poetry should be lightly drawn upon. School readers should touch all the main sources of the mental life, and should furnish a good introduction to English literature; and that they may do this, they must be mainly drawn from the literature of power rather than the literature of knowledge.* Many subjects important in themselves are unsuitable for school readers, because they do not admit of literary treatment. No one would think of cutting a reading lesson out of a mathematical text-book or a scientific treatise. In fact,

* "The function of the first [the literature of knowledge] is to teach; the function of the second, to move; the first is a rudder, the second an oar or sail."—(De Quincey: Alexander Pope.)

it is only when a writer on science turns aside from his subject proper and seizes its literary elements, as its descriptive or poetical phases in their peculiar relations to his own mind, that he can be said to produce literature at all. No discredit is hereby cast upon books of information or books of science; they are invaluable both in school and in home, but it is a mistake to use them as school readers. The geographical readers, natural history readers, and the like can be successfully used only in a supplementary capacity, subordinate both to the special subject and to reading. Of all special subjects, history no doubt furnishes the best material for such a purpose, because it is so rich in human interest. Having first remarked that in early childhood "the normal condition of life is a sensitive imagination, curious, wondering, reaching out to the unknown, building busily fabrics, often of strange form, out of the material cast in its way," and that in school parlance *reading* is the term applied to an exercise which is an end in itself, Mr. Scudder says: "Give to the child as soon as he is master of the rudiments of reading some form of great imaginative literature, and continue, year after year, to set large works before him, until he has completed his school course." This he calls "the educational law of reading," which he again states in this form: "I repeat that the educational law of reading lies in a steady presentation to the growing mind of those works of art in literature which are the glory of the nation, of the race, and have an undying power to feed the imagination." * Professor Charles Eliot Norton also contends earnestly that reading books, all of them, should be made up of pure literature; and, agreeably with this view, he introduces into the first book of

* The Atlantic Monthly, February, 1894, pp. 255, 256.

the series of readers that he has edited a large part of Mother Goose.*

The school reader has been called the "walking-beam of the school." Besides being a practice book for teaching an art, and an anthology of English literature, it furnishes motive power for all the school studies, and particularly for those that are taught from books. Moreover, it is scarcely an exaggeration to call it "the walking-beam" of the intellectual life. It is therefore to be regretted that there should be room for question as to the character of the great series of readers that are used in the schools. It is not difficult to find critics who hold that, in this respect, we have lost ground within the last twenty-five years. Lindley Murray's English Reader served its purpose, and passed out of use; no wise man would attempt to bring it back to the home and the school; but it must be said to the credit of the old Grammarian that his book contributed to form the minds of successive generations of readers, many of whom in correctness of literary taste and appreciation need not fear comparison with any of the better-schooled youth of our own times.

This chapter relates to reading as thought. Moreover, this book deals with the thought side of reading rather than the mechanical-mental side. This is not because the mechanical-mental side is unimportant and does not need careful attention. School children are not going to pick up the technical elements of reading or acquire vocal facility unconsciously. Some, no doubt, will do so. The majority, however, must be taught to read by a teacher who understands that the mechanical parts of the art are second only to the spiritual parts. The old word "drill,"

* See the preface to the Heart of Oak Books, Second Book.

which is now so much out of fashion, has its place, for the organs of speech will not, without conscious effort, become accustomed to those co-ordinations among themselves that are needed in reading, or become co-ordinated to the mind, without appropriate exercises. Accordingly, from the beginning the vocal or elocutionary elements demand constant attention. Here everything depends on habit. Distinct articulation and due deliberation in utterance make reading intelligible; the one guards against indistinctness, and the other against the confusion that arises from too great rapidity. Emphasis brings out the relative importance of words. In reading, pronunciation must be watched as carefully as grammatical forms are in conversation and language lessons. At the same time, the teacher of reading must cultivate spontaneity in the pupil. Freedom is all-essential. The function of criticism will be made the subject of a chapter later on; here, however, it is necessary to say that, when the class has prepared the lesson, either with or without the teacher's assistance, and they come to read, they should be left to read freely without interruption. In this way only can they put themselves into the work, which is so essential to good reading. And this is another argument for thorough preparation; without it the pupil can not be master either of the subject or of himself. In the primary class the mechanical part of reading comes first, in the advanced class last.

Two short exercises will illustrate what has been said in regard to questioning on reading lessons.

I.

SUNSET ON THE BORDER.

I.

Day set on Norham's castled steep,
And Tweed's fair river, broad and deep,
And Cheviot's mountains lone:
The battled towers, the donjon keep,
The loophole grates where captives weep,
The flanking walls that round it sweep,
In yellow lustre shone.

II.

The warriors on the turrets high,
Moving athwart the evening sky,
Seemed forms of giant height:
Their armour, as it caught the rays,
Flashed back again the western blaze
In lines of dazzling light.

III.

St. George's banner, broad and gay,
Now faded, as the fading ray
Less bright, and less, was flung;
The evening gale had scarce the power
To wave it on the donjon tower,
So heavily it hung.

Name the writer of these stanzas and the poem from which they are taken. Generally speaking, in what direction does the Tweed flow? Into what body of water does it empty? Why is it so celebrated in song, story, and history? Name the countries on either side. On which side is Norham? Is there anything in the stanzas that enables us certainly to tell? What bearing, if any, has the banner on this question? On which side of the river are the Cheviots? In prose construction, would

Norham and Tweed be in the possessive case? Explain the expressions "castled steep" and "the donjon keep." Explain also line five of the first stanza. For what noun does "it," line six, stand? What are flanking walls and turrets? Describe the armour that the soldiers wore. In what direction were the rays flashed back? Why did the warriors on the turret seem giants?

The stanzas having been well sifted by such questions as these, the teacher may continue: "Now we will go through the lines and build up the picture. First, put in the river, broad, fair, and deep, and the lone mountains; then the castle crowning the steep, with its battled towers, its donjon keep, and flanking walls sweeping around the keep, and the captives weeping at the grated windows—the whole shining with the golden lustre of the closing day. Put the warriors on the high towers, moving back and forth before the evening sky, their burnished armour reflecting the blaze of the setting sun. Over the donjon fling out the banner, broad, gay, and faded, hanging heavily in the evening breeze."

The great point in such exercises is not so much to call out or to impart definite information on particular points as it is to stimulate the imagination—to develop the whole scene from the words. In framing questions care should be taken to change somewhat the words of the text, or to throw them into a new order. Words and forms of expression tend to become crusted over, and it is necessary to break up the crust.

The last thing to be done is to read the stanzas in a manner that will give the natural colour and life to the whole. And here it may be remarked that what Socrates says to Ion of the rhapsode is equally true of the reader. "And no man can be a rhapsode who does not understand the meaning of the poet. For the rhapsode ought to in-

terpret the mind of the poet to his hearers, and how can he interpret him well unless he knows what he means?"

II.

LINES FROM LOWELL'S POEM ON THE GRAVES OF TWO ENGLISH SOLDIERS ON CONCORD BATTLE GROUND.

1. These men were brave enough, and true
2. To the hired soldier's bulldog creed;
3. What brought them here they never knew,
4. They fought as suits the English breed:
5. They came three thousand miles, and died,
6. To keep the Past upon its throne;
7. Unheard beyond the ocean tide,
8. Their English mother made her moan.
9. The turf that covers them no thrill
10. Sends up to fire the heart and brain;
11. No stronger purpose nerves the will,
12. No hope renews its youth again:
13. From farm to farm the Concord glides,
14. And trails my fancy with its flow;
15. O'erhead the balanced hen-hawk slides,
16. Twinned in the river's heaven below.
17. But go, whose Bay State bosom stirs,
18. Proud of thy birth and neighbour's right,
19. Where sleep the heroic villagers
20. Borne red and stiff from Concord fight;
21. Thought Reuben, snatching down his gun,
22. Or Seth, as ebbed the life away,
23. What earthquake rifts would shoot and run
24. World-wide from that short April fray?

Such questions as the following will naturally occur to the intelligent teacher who reads carefully the foregoing lines:—

2. What is the difference between a hired soldier and any other soldier? Does the word "hired" always mean what it here means? What do you understand by a bulldog creed?

3. What did bring the two soldiers to Concord?

4. How does it suit the English breed to fight?

6. What is meant by "keeping the Past upon its throne"? How did the death of the two men contribute to that end?

8. Explain this line.

9–12. Explain these lines, and name the leading nouns and verbs.

13–16. What connection have these lines with the four preceding and the four succeeding ones? Why has the poet introduced them? Would you say the Mississippi "glides," or the Niagara? Explain "the balanced hen-hawk slides," "twinned," and "river's heaven."

17. What is the antecedent of "whose"? What is the force of "but"?

18. Why has the poet connected "birth" and "neighbour's right"?

19, 20. Where are these villagers to be found?

21, 22. Name the subject of "thought."

23, 24. Explain these lines.

In Chapter VII something was said about the ethical value of lessons in the lower grades. Such value should never be lost sight of throughout the school course. History and literature are the school studies that are richest in such value, and they must be the great reliance of the teacher in promoting the ethical culture of his pupils. Still, the ethical effect of these studies should be felt indirectly rather than directly. Dr. Harris has wisely said: "There is an ethical and an æsthetical content to each work of art. It is profitable to point out both of these in the interest of the child's growing insight into human nature. The ethical should, however, be kept in subordination to the æsthetical, but for the sake of the supreme interests of the ethical itself. Otherwise the study of a work of art degenerates into a goody-goody performance, and its effects on the child are to cause a reaction against the moral. The child protects his inner individuality against effacement through external authority by taking an attitude of rebellion against stories with an appended moral. Herein the superiority of the æsthetical in literary art is to be seen." *

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* Report of the Committee of Fifteen on Correlation of Studies.

CHAPTER XIV.

TEACHING COMPOSITION.

FORMERLY the compositions in schools where they were required filled the pupils with more fear and trembling than any other exercise. "Composition day" was the black day of the week or month. For this there were several reasons. Most persons feel shy and timid when called upon to write compositions that they are to read in public, and especially the young and inexperienced. Then in the old elementary schools pupils rarely received any preparation for essay-writing. They knew nothing of language lessons, and written work of any kind was not required. They were rather left until they reached the upper grades of the elementary school, or perhaps the high school or academy, when they were suddenly called upon to produce the dreaded "composition." The call made, they were generally left to choose their own themes, to gather their own materials, to make their own outlines, and to write their own essays—all with little or no help. The only criticism was a few verbal corrections written on the paper, which half the time the pupils did not understand. Some of the more inventive or facile of them, by sheer dint of effort, struggled on and became good writers, but the majority found little benefit in writing their compositions. It was a *régime* that needed to be changed in every particular, and that has been so changed in all the

best schools. Still, the subject is often badly handled at the present time, and it yet needs much careful discussion.

In the broadest sense composition is the expression of thought by means of language. It involves invention and style; or, first, the provision of ideas, and, second, their arrangement and utterance in sentences and paragraphs. Properly it includes the oral expression of thought as well as its written expression, but usage has confined the word practically to writing.

Composition follows reading in the order of the school, as reading follows speech in the order of life. It rests on the same fundamental principle as the other language-arts. As the child learns to talk by talking and to read by reading, so he learns to write by writing. Accordingly, power of utterance is the first desideratum. Fluency must be sought for before correctness; or, in other words, the teacher must have freedom and spontaneity in view. While it is true that to write good sentences is more mechanical than to speak or read them, at the same time we must rely upon use and wont rather than precepts. Formal grammar and rhetoric should play no part in the early stages of composition teaching.

Obviously composition stands to language lessons in the same relation that the study of literature stands to reading lessons. It is a more advanced stage of progress. What has been said therefore of teaching those lessons, in previous chapters, is, for the most part, equally true and valuable in the present chapter. In fact, the two exercises are so much alike that it is impossible to write intelligently about one without touching on the other. All the exercises that are grouped around the reading lesson should contribute to the composition lesson. Telling stories, conversation, reading, whether silent or aloud,

recitations, oral narratives—all tend to swell at once the volume of the pupil's thought and of his vocabulary. Much the same may be said of all the exercises of the school. Whatever adds to the pupil's store of facts and ideas, enhances his power to think, and augments his linguistic resources, will minister to the art of expressing himself in written words. Still, the help that comes from these sources is not sufficient. No matter how full the mind may be, and how fluent the expression, the composition will not write itself. At first the child has one single lesson that sums up his school work, viz., his reading; but as he ascends the grades, the language-arts begin to diverge more and more, and finally become distinct studies, so called. Like the others, composition is a distinct and separate art, and it can be acquired only through the use of its own distinctive methods.

To adjust one's thought and utterance to the *stylus*—to co-ordinate mind and pen—can be accomplished only through practice. In Radestock's words, "Habit must build the bridge, uniting theory with practice, by changing dead knowledge into living power." There are good thinkers who are neither good speakers nor good writers, but which is the larger class—the good speakers who are poor writers or the good writers who are good speakers—it were hard to say. Ascham says, "Ready speakers generally be not the best, plainest, and wisest writers, nor yet the deepest judges in weighty matters, because they do not tarry to weigh and judge of things as they ought, but having their heads overfull of matter be like pens overfull of ink, which will sooner blot than make any fair letter at all." One thing is clear, that the majority of people find the art of composition a difficult one. It was said of a great oculist that he spoiled a whole hatful of eyes learning to operate for cataract, and it is probable

that most good writers have spoiled as many reams of paper in learning to write.

How far excellence in writing depends upon Nature, and how far upon practice, is an old question, and one about which men are never likely to agree. Professor Minto has stated the case very temperately, as follows:

"The successful practice of all arts must depend largely upon natural gifts. In writing, as in other arts, rules do not carry the practitioner far; rules must always be for the most part negative, and a man may have the completest knowledge how not to write and yet dip his pen and cudgel his brains in vain. None the less it is absurd to suppose that in writing, which is one of the most difficult of the arts, a man has nothing to learn, nothing to gain by study—that he has only to know his subject and the words will come of themselves in the best possible choice and order." *

While we may cheerfully concede that the great writer, like the poet, is born and not made, we need not hesitate to say that the ordinary writer is made and not born. It is a matter of practice rather than of talent or genius. The school can do little for the great writer, and he may safely be left to shift for himself, but it can do much for the ordinary one. Still more, the practice must run along the line of examples rather than of precepts. Roger Ascham said very aptly: "And surely one example is more valuable, both to good and ill, than twenty precepts written in books. And so Plato, not in one or two, but in divers places doth plainly teach." Quintilian declares that without the assistance of Nature precepts and treatises are of no avail. His treatise, he says, was not written for him to whom talents are wanting any more than treatises on

* Plain Principles of Prose Composition, p. 8.

agriculture are written for barren ground. And still he closes his introduction, from which this illustration is taken, with the impressive warning: "These very qualities, likewise, are of no profit in themselves without a skilful teacher, persevering study, and great and continued exercise in writing, reading, and speaking."

But it would be a great mistake to suppose that the main efficacy of examples or models is conscious imitation. As a man unconsciously takes on the manners and habits of the society in the midst of which he lives, moves, and has his being, so he takes on the manner and the style both of the thought and language of the books in which he becomes deeply interested. The fact is, that intelligent minds grow up in a literary environment that impresses them strongly. As Professor Minto says again:

"The obvious truth is, that the man who writes well must do so by example, if not by precept. In any language that has been used for centuries as a literary instrument, the beginner can not begin as if he were the first in the field. Whatever he purposes to write, be it essay, or sermon, or leading article, history, or fiction, there are hundreds of things of the same kind in existence, some of which he must have read and can not help taking more or less as patterns. The various forms or plans of composition of every kind have been gradually developed by the practice of successive generations. If a man writes effectively without giving a thought to the manner of his composition, it must be because he has chanced upon good models, and not merely because he knows his subject well, or feels it deeply, and has a natural gift of expression. He can spare himself the trouble of thinking because his predecessors have thought for him; he is rich as being the possessor of inherited wealth." *

* Plain Principles of Prose Composition, pp. 8, 9.

Still, we can not trust to environment alone. There must be study and practice and earnest striving to improve. The following directions and hints, as a whole, are given for the guidance of the teacher rather than of the pupil:—

I. Good training in the other language-arts, and particularly in language lessons, should prepare the way for formal composition. It will rob the essay of half its terrors. Unfortunately, the teacher on going into the school will sometimes find that such preparation has not been made. Furthermore, it will be impracticable to put the older and more advanced pupils at pure language work. What shall be done in such cases? No better course can be taken than to effect a compromise between what should be and what can be, adapting the work to the pupil the best that circumstances will permit.

II. In composition it is peculiarly important to enlist the interest and pleasure of the pupil. Mere drill is useful in some studies, as in mathematics, but it will accomplish little in composition. Essays that do not interest the pupil are not likely to interest others.

III. The choice of a subject is of importance. The subject determines the pupil's source of matter, and matter and style can not be separated. If he has an abundance of ideas he is likely to express himself with clearness and force. If he has no ideas, or few, the plight of the children of Israel in making bricks without straw is pleasant in comparison. The subject should inspire confidence in the pupil, not be a load for him to carry. There is little benefit in the pupil's laboriously piecing together facts and ideas and stamping the product an "essay."

IV. As a rule, the teacher should choose and assign the subjects. If this is not done, the pupil is likely to lose

much valuable time in making a choice, and to make a bad one at last. It is important to help the pupil over the discouraging beginning. Many persons find it difficult to make a start who write well when once the start is made. Under this head still more definite hints and suggestions must be given:

1. The teacher should not throw subjects around the class at random, but, as far as possible, consult the individual taste and capacity of pupils. The right theme should find the right boy or girl. Composition should follow and not precede the pupil's interest. The teacher should choose the line of least resistance.

2. Avoid abstract and general themes and choose those that are concrete and particular. On this point Mr. Huffcut has some excellent remarks.

"Every schoolboy has written his essay on the virtues, and every schoolgirl has filled her allotted number of pages with vague generalities regarding Sunshine and Shadow. Consign all such subjects to the limbo of Dr. Quackenbos's Rhetoric. If you doubt that that is the proper place for them, read his list of five hundred and sixty-six subjects for essays, among which one finds such as Spring, Peace, War, Death, Life, Anger, Astronomy, Jealousy, Conscience, and Law; Earth's Benefactors, The Stoic Philosophy, The Comparative Influence of Individuals and Learned Societies in Forming Literary Character in a Nation; and, finally, as if neither this world nor the limits of time could confine the knowledge and imagination of a schoolboy, the learned doctor seriously announces as a suitable subject for classroom use The Immortality of the Soul. We can not avoid a little disappointment at not finding something about the Kantian Philosophy, Esoteric Buddhism, or Transcendental Physics; but perhaps these omissions are compensated for by the inclu-

sion of the subjects, Mesmerism, Psychology, and Spiritualism." *

3. In the elementary school "book subjects" should be used sparingly; subjects from Nature and life will be found more real and interesting. But, care must be taken not to vulgarize the mind by the selection of vulgar subjects. The cyclopædia subject is vicious, since it stimulates compilation rather than observation and thinking, and so lacks reality. Still, literature is a proper and indispensable source of subjects and materials. The pupil who is old enough to read Ivanhoe or The Lady of the Lake may write out the action of the novel or poem, or a part of it. Shakespeare may be used to excellent advantage in the school. For younger pupils shorter tales or stories will answer the purpose. Nor do I mean positively to prohibit the cyclopædia; it may be used to much advantage in a tentative form of research work; the great point is to make the essay real and vital.

4. There are four types of prose composition: narrative, description, exposition, and argumentation. As pure types they should be taught in the order in which they are here enumerated. The bearing of this point on the selection of themes is obvious. Narrative, or the story form, is the proper one for young children. Description should not be attempted until the powers of observation are somewhat developed.

5. Progressively, the level of the subjects, as well as the treatment demanded, should be raised. In particular, pupils should not, to the end of their school life, be trusted only with particular themes, but should gradually have their faces turned toward abstract thought.

V. The teacher should instruct the pupil in the *modus*

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* English in the Preparatory Schools, pp. 15, 16.

or machinery of composition. Pupils, and older persons for that matter, who have ideas and language, often fail in composition because they do not know where to begin, how to proceed, or when to end. In a word, they do not know how to organize their matter. This is a subject which calls for much careful thought on the teacher's part, and to assist the teacher these more definite observations are submitted :

1. There are three units of composition : the sentence, the paragraph, and the essay. Every one of these units in itself is an organic whole. Back of it is a distinct idea.

A sentence is the proper expression in words of one main thought, with or without one or more modifying thoughts. It is not any string of words that may be parsed, or that even makes sense, but an organization of words conveying a clear and separate thought. It must contain one subject and one predicate at least, and it may contain more or less subsidiary matter.

A paragraph is an ordered series of such sentences that together present one phase or aspect of a subject. It is a fully developed thought. It is not, therefore, a mere series of sentences, a piece or section of a composition cut off at random, but a complete organic whole.

An essay proper is a series of paragraphs that deal with the whole of the subject, or with several phases of it, duly arranged in order. It is not a piece of writing filling so many pages, or occupying so much time, but it is a thought-out composition having a beginning, a middle, and an end.

2. By the time that he has reached the seventh grade, at least, the pupil should understand the function of every one of these units. Whether he can define them or not is not material. The teacher can readily show their use and relations by analyzing with the class a number of suitable

compositions. Of the three the paragraph will give the most trouble. This is partly owing to the caprice with which good writers sometimes paragraph their work, partly to the slight attention that books devoted to composition and rhetoric give to the subject, and partly to its intrinsic difficulty. The paragraph stands midway between the sentence and the essay. It is at once both a whole and a part. It rests, however, on a single psychological conception. "In all our voluntary thinking," says Professor James, "there is some topic or subject about which all the members of the thought revolve," and this topic is the core of the paragraph. The principal trouble in handling it arises from the tendency of the revolving members to fly off and attach themselves to some neighbouring centre of thought. The pupil will commit many blunders, and can attain to skill only through much practice; and these facts are reasons why his attention should be directed to the subject almost from the time that he begins to write. Written or printed matter that is divided into sections of appropriate length looks better on the page than matter that is not so divided; still, the great reason for paragraphing is psychological. It is needed to show the logical relations of the different parts of the subject-matter.

3. The sentence is the ultimate unit of all speech that expresses thought. Without good sentences good composition is impossible. At the same time good sentences do not insure good paragraphs or a good essay. The relations of the sentences are hardly less important than the sentences themselves. Still, the sentence is the beginning point. In order to write good sentences the writer must see clearly the subject, the predicate, and the subsidiary matter. Whether he knows the words that name or describe these elements or not, is of little practical conse-

quence. And further, the first sentence has a certain relation to the second one, the second to the third, and so on. This is the reason why it would be very inconsiderate for a writer to compose his sentences as he might discharge shots from a pistol, mechanically. He should rather seize the whole view of the subject that forms the topic of the paragraph, and then proceed to write his sentences. It would be too mechanical for him to count out in advance these sentences, but he should mentally encompass the ground that he proposes to inclose in words. In this way the paragraph reacts most decidedly upon the sentences. In a previous chapter it was incidentally remarked that the child's first essays should be single paragraphs. In this way the idea of the paragraph will be developed, and also skill in executing it. In such cases, however, it is not at all necessary that the several views or phases of the subject should be sharply discriminated. The paragraph essay will in due time give way to the essay proper.

Dr. Whately has remarked that copiousness of matter follows from the limitation of the view, and that fact is an additional reason for studying the paragraph. "The more general and extensive view," he says, "will often suggest nothing to the mind but vague and trite remarks, when, upon narrowing the field of discussion, many interesting questions of detail present themselves."* While a boy of fourteen can not do much with the universe, he may fairly be expected to treat adequately some very small part of it. A pupil of mine once wrote an excellent essay on "Washington as a Farmer," who would probably have written an indifferent or poor one on "Washington."

VI. What has been said under the last division involves the making of outlines. To analyze a subject is to

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* Elements of Rhetoric, i, 1, 2.

discover the phases that present proper subjects for paragraphs. Accordingly, when the pupil passes from the paragraph essay to the essay proper, the teacher must give the needed attention to this matter. Some subjects he should analyze for the benefit of the class, outlining them on the blackboard. He should freely discuss plans and outlines with the pupil privately. Outlines may also be required of the pupil that he is not expected to fill out. If a pupil merely holds a subject dangling before his vision, or causes it rapidly to revolve like a thaumotrope, he will not get any clear view of it either in part or in whole; when, if he would carefully look at its several phases, he would immediately discover things that would interest him. Once the subject has been chosen and the plan agreed upon, the remainder of the road is commonly easy. Of course when book subjects are assigned the teacher must be ready to furnish titles and directions for reading.

VII. Rules and criticism. While the function of criticism in the language-arts will be made the subject of a separate chapter, two or three observations are called for here.

One is, that a teacher of composition must not be too nice. What the pupil needs is writing, and plenty of it, and the teacher must not unduly repress spontaneity. The first thing is to get the stream of thought to flowing. Still, grammatical errors and vulgarisms must be rigorously corrected from the first. Absurdity of matter and infelicity in expression must be left, in great part, for the pruning knife of time. Another thing is that rules should not be taught as formal lessons, but should be introduced, when introduced at all, in connection with criticism. As Professor Minto says in the passage already quoted, "Rules must always be, for the most part, negative." Again, only mechanical rules should be given; rules that

embody psychological laws should be left to a later day. The leading rules for capitalization and punctuation should be taught in the lower grades. Let not the teacher, however, be too minute in his exactions, particularly under the second head. Punctuation is an art, and a very delicate one at that. Finally, the teacher should arrange exercises and lessons with reference to pupils' mistakes, as in capitalization and the use of verbal forms and syntactical constructions.

One very important point should, perhaps, have received earlier mention, viz., the relation of thought-material to thought-expression. It has indeed been alluded to in the remarks concerning the assignment of subjects, and again in the quotation from Whately regarding copiousness of matter. The topic brings before us again, at a more advanced stage of the education of the child, the relation of intellect and language. From the very nature of this relation, it follows that the first requisite to composition is to have something to say. Composition is a real and not a formal exercise; and the admonition to "first catch the hare" is not more essential to cooking a hare than the admonition to attend first to invention is to the formation of good style. The great writers of the world have been men gifted in both gathering and retaining the materials of composition. They have been men of observation, of insight, of reading, of reflection, of capacious and retentive memory, of two or more of these qualities, as well as of creative faculties. The powers of creation can be developed only on a basis of such materials. We are amazed at the fertility and productivity of mind shown by Sir Walter Scott when at the maturity of his powers. There is equal reason why we should be amazed by the omnivorous reading, the wide and keen observation of Nature and man, and the thorough research

that in earlier years accumulated the materials which his imagination afterward worked up into ballad, poem, and romance.

It will be seen that the plan of teaching language and composition outlined in these pages does not contemplate the use by the pupil of the current books on those subjects, or indeed of any books at all. Such helps would be useful to the well-equipped teacher; to the ill-equipped one they would be invaluable; but it is not advisable to put them into the hands of the learner. The work to be done is not the learning or recitation of lessons, but rather the practice of an art under intelligent guidance. The formal instruction that the pupil really needs should be furnished by the teacher. To set the pupil at work at a book makes the work artificial, mechanical, and unreal. It is just as absurd as it would be to give him a book of object-lessons.

Much is now said about conducting teaching on the intensive or concentrative plan. The idea is so to select and combine studies that one will help another. The desirability of pursuing this course in the language-arts has several times been urged in preceding chapters, and nothing more needs to be said on the general subject. But the question sometimes assumes this form: Shall a special teacher of English be employed in the school? In opposition to an exclusive reliance upon such a teacher, it has been urged that, in the period of life when imitation is so powerful, the child should be kept as far as possible from bad models, and as near as possible to good models; also "that every thought which he expresses, whether orally or on paper, should be regarded as a proper subject for criticism as to language. Thus, every lesson in geography or physics or mathematics may and should become a part of the child's training in English." "There can

be no more appropriate moment for a brief lesson in expression," it is said, "than the moment when the pupil has something which he is trying to express. If this principle is not regarded, a recitation in history or in botany, for example, may easily undo all that a set exercise in English has accomplished. In order that both teacher and pupil may attach due importance to this incidental instruction in English, the pupil's standing in any subject should depend in part on his use of clear and correct English." *

While the general tenor of this teaching is sound, it is in one particular carried too far. If the pupil is allowed in his general lessons to fall into slovenly habits of expression, the good work of formal lessons in English will be undone; what is woven by day is ravelled out at night. But it is a great mistake to say that there can be no more appropriate moment for a lesson in expression than the moment when the pupil has something which he is trying to say. So far from that, this is the very moment when he should be left free and untrammelled to express what is in his mind, and this by the teacher of English as well as by the teacher of grammar or physics. It is the moment for expression and not for a lesson in expression. To be sure, when the expression has been given as freely and fully as possible, it is the proper subject of correction. That must be a question of judgment. There can be no doubt, however, that the schools are now suffering, and suffering severely, from failures of teachers in the same school, as high schools, to co-operate in the work of teaching English.

Dr. Franklin gives an interesting account of the way in which he formed his style of composition, which is

* Report of Conference on English to the Committee of Ten, p. 87. Washington, 1892.

certainly clear, direct, and forcible.* This account happily illustrates what may be called the study of literary mechanism or architecture. While such study is extremely useful in its way, it must not be misunderstood or overvalued. Neither this bit of history nor Dr. Johnson's recommendation of Addison quoted in another place must be taken too literally. Conscious imitation of style is a fatal method in literature. What the student wants is the genius or spirit of his model; and the best way, in fact the only way, to secure that is to bring himself under the power of the model. The model must work *in* him as a force, not be imposed *upon* him as a rule from without. The method should be unconscious imitation, not conscious; dynamics, not statics. The first new sap that circulates through the branches of a tree in springtime quickly pushes off the dead leaves that have defied all the storms of winter.

Composition is a noble art, the value of which is not confined within narrow limits. It is rather of universal value. In school it directly helps the work in all the studies—in chemistry, physics, and mathematics, as well as in history and literature. In real life the art stands the professional man in good stead, as well as the man of letters. Ability to express one's thoughts clearly, forcibly, and with a degree of elegance—that is, ability to write good English—is perhaps the highest test of mental cultivation. It is the slow-maturing fruit of real culture. Practice in the art should begin low down in the grades, and should continue, if possible, to the end of the college course. If this be impossible, as sometimes unfortunately it is, reasonable pains should be taken to create an interest in the work and an enthusiasm for it, while it is a subject for instruction, that will last the pupil through life.

* See his Autobiography, Bigelow's edition, pp. 95, 96.

CHAPTER XV.

TEACHING ENGLISH LITERATURE.

In preceding chapters many remarks have been made that bear on teaching English literature. It is necessary, however, to supplement these remarks, which have been incidental in character, with a formal chapter on the subject.

The first thing for the teacher of literature to settle in his mind, and the most important, is the object or aim to be held in view. Why should literature be taught in the schools of the country? What is it to teach literature? What is taught when literature, as such, is taught? What is literature? Clear answers to these questions are the more necessary, for the reason that quite different things are taught as literature in the schools. Manifestly, too, we can not answer them without grasping the elements that enter into the conception of literature. These elements, as I view it, are correctly stated by Mr. Quick in his Educational Reformers.

"When the conceptions of an individual mind are expressed in a permanent form of words, we get literature. The sum total of all the permanent forms of expression in one language make up the literature of that language; and if no one has given his conceptions a form which has been preserved, the language is without a literature. There are, then, two things essential to a literary work: first, the conceptions of an individual mind; second, a

permanent form of expression. Hence it follows that the domain of literature is distinct from the domain of natural or mathematical science. Science does not give us the conceptions of an individual mind, but it tells us what every rational person who studies the subject must think. And science is entirely independent of any form of words: a proposition of Euclid is science; a sonnet of Wordsworth's is literature. We learn from Euclid certain truths which we should have learnt from some one else if Euclid had never existed, and the propositions may be conveyed equally well in different forms of words and in any language. But a sonnet of Wordsworth's conveys thought and feeling peculiar to the poet; and even if the same thought and feeling were conveyed to us in other words, we should lose at least half of what he has given us. Poetry is indeed only one kind of literature, but it is the highest kind; and what is true of literary works in verse is true also in a measure of literary works in prose. . . . There are two ways in which a work of literature may excite our admiration and affect our minds. These are, first, by the beauty of the conceptions it conveys to us; and, second, by the beauty of the language in which it conveys them. In the greatest works the two excellences will be combined." *

Literary taste relates especially to the second of these elements, beauty of expression. Reverting to Professor Laurie's analysis of language, we see that literature embraces the first and last of the three elements. It is a real study and an æsthetic study. Fundamentally the object of teaching literature is the same as the object of teaching reading as thought; the main difference between

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* Pp. 5, 6. See also J. H. Newman, University Subjects, Literature.

the reading of the primary grades and the literature of the high school or the college being one of degree and not of kind. And this brings us back to the old idea, that the art of reading is only a tool with which to acquire the wealth of knowledge, thought, and beauty with which books are stored. To convey meaning is the great function of language; but literature has also a message of grace and beauty for the soul, which is partly in the thought itself and partly in the expression of the thought. Gray's Elegy, for instance, pleases not so much by its ideas as by the setting and expression of the ideas. The stanza beginning

"Can storied urn or animated bust,"

translated into ordinary prose, is commonplace enough. Great literature, prose or poetry, and especially of the creative order, is rich in this ideal and æsthetic element. It is not something separate and apart from the real element, but is bound up with it, and can not be separated from it. Good style goes with subject-matter. "Style is not to be compared," it has been said, "to the vesture which covers a man's body, but rather to the native and natural covering of the beasts of the field. The play and elasticity of the close-fitting lion's hide is very different from any vestment with which the fashionable tailor covers the lion's master."

We may say, then, that in teaching literature the real element and the ideal element—the substance and the art—must be held together. Still, the major stress should be placed on thought or substance. What follows when men sink meaning in words has been amply illustrated in two great periods of intellectual history—first, in the decline of Grecian literature, and secondly in the decline of the Renaissance. A mistake at this point committed in the schools would be fatal to all sound education. Were

literature to remain in the schools a day after the teachers should get into their heads the idea that their great function is to teach "beauty," it would be an unmitigated curse.

But while literature as such presents to our minds but two primary aspects, it presents many subordinate ones. It may be studied with a lexical purpose, dictionary in hand; or it may be treated philologically, inquiring into the history and origin of words. It may be made to teach or illustrate the history of opinion and feeling, manners and customs, morals, politics, and religion, social life, and many other interesting matters. The stress may be laid on phonology, on the structure of sentences, on style, on the mannerisms of authors. The growth of literature, the life, character, and environment of authors, the relation of literature to social life as cause or effect, are all important aspects of the subject. Or the student may spend his time hunting for curiosities, just as men have sought out strange signboards in cities and quaint epitaphs in churchyards. It must be admitted, too, that these subordinate features have value, but not equal value. All, or most of them, may be recognised in teaching literature, but not to the same degree. The truth is that they have variable values, according to the interest and purpose of the student. But, plainly, these variable factors must not be permitted to usurp the place that belongs of right to the universal factors. It is perfectly proper to use literature as a basis for teaching grammar, philology, history, and the like, only the teacher who thus employs it should not suppose that he is teaching literature. Mr. John Morley says, "Literature, viewed as an instrument of systematic education . . . would mean a connected survey of idea, sentiment, imagination, taste, invention, and all the other material of literature, as affecting, and affected

by, the great experiences of the human mind, and social changes brought by time."* Literature, therefore, has a grand teaching function, instructing men in politics, in morals and manners, in taste, and in religion, expanding their minds, filling them with high ideals, and in all ways refining their character and ennobling their life.

It can not be said, on the whole, that literature is so taught in the schools as to fill this measure. Often attention is fixed on subordinate ends to such an extent that the work ceases to be the study of literature; turning on grammar, rhetoric, philology, criticism, or on two or more of these combined. Nor is it hard to discover the causes of the failure. Those to whom the majority of teachers look for guidance have sometimes failed to state clearly and strongly the true ends of the study. The classical tradition and the difficulty of the subject together have suggested false ideals and false mehods. Classical teachers tend to lay the stress on the grammatical and philological elements of the classics to the exclusion of the literary elements; which, again, is due partly to the fact that the pupils are learning foreign languages, and partly to the exaggeration of scientific method, due in large measure to German influence. Often notes and comments are accumulated until the classic is buried out of sight. Often the teacher expends his strength on points that are important only to the specialist. Now, most unfortunately, the classical teacher has stood as the model of the literature teacher. First it has been assumed that English literature should be made to answer the same educational ends as the classical or modern languages, and then methods have been chosen with reference to that ideal. The assumption is false and the methods

* J. C. Collins: The Study of English Literature, pp. 109, 110.

are vicious. For evidence, I may point to the schools and to many of the editions of English classics that have been prepared for use in the schools. My attention has been called in particular to the "Cambridge Milton" edited by Mr. A. W. Verity for the University Press. Paradise Lost, books iii and iv, now lies before me. The volume, which is really a beautiful one, is made up as follows: Introduction (embracing Life of Milton, History of Paradise Lost, The Story of the Poem, Milton's Blank Verse), 71 pages; text, 60 pages; notes, 78 pages; index of words and phrases, 4 pages; total, 213 pages. The disproportion of the illustrative matter to the text is really much greater than the figures show, because the type in which it is put is much smaller. Many of the notes deal with matter that is unimportant or merely curious, thus drawing the attention of teacher and pupil away from the "Milton" to the sayings about Milton. Every student of the poem will remember the lines (33–36, book iii) in which the poet speaks of the blind poets and prophets:

> . . . "Nor sometimes forget
> Those other two equalled with me in fate,
> So were I equalled with them in renown,
> Blind Thamyris and blind Mæonides,
> And Tiresias and Phineus, prophets old."

To these lines the editor devotes nineteen lines of closely printed commentary.* It is indeed very desirable that

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* "Thamyris; according to Homer, Iliad ii, pp. 595–600, a Thracian bard, who, for boasting that he could surpass the Muses in song, was deprived of his sight and of the power of singing. Plato mentions him together with Orpheus twice (Laws viii, p. 829 E, Rep. x, p. 620 A).

"Mæonides, i. e., Homer; called Mæonides, either as a son of Mæon, or as a native of Mæonia, the ancient name of Lydia. Hence he is also called Mæonius senex, and his poems the Mæoniæ chartæ

there should be a "Milton" that contains all this learning, and Professor Masson has well met that want in his well-known edition of the Poetical Works. But in a "Milton for schools," such as the "Cambridge Milton" purports to be, it is wholly out of place. Every good teacher knows that the pupil will not learn the facts that Mr. Verity gives unless he is crammed, that he will very soon forget them even then, and that they would be of little value to him if he remembered them at all. "There are millions of truths," says John Locke, "that men are not concerned to know"; and few mental qualities in the teacher are more valuable than the sense of perspective. We do not know the name of Horace's bore, and it is just as well that we do not.

Directly opposed to the Verity model of teaching literature is the one described by Mr. Hudson in his essay entitled How to use Shakespeare in School.* Save as might be necessary to accommodate the spirit of the passage to prose writing, I do not see that it is necessary or advisable to change a single word in the following passage before we adopt it as a general method for school use:

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or Mæonium carmen. The tradition of his blindness is mentioned as early as the Homeric Hymn to the Delian Apollo.

"Tiresias, the blind soothsayer of Thebes, famous through the Œdipus Rex of Sophocles and many other works down to Tennyson's Tiresias. In De Idea Platonica, pp. 25, 26, M., refers to him as 'the Theban seer whose blindness proved his best illumination.'

"Phineus, another blind prophet, king of Salmydessus in Thrace; best known in connection with the Harpies (Æneid iii, pp. 211–213), from whose torments two of the Argonauts freed him. In his second Letter to Leonard Philaras (September 28, 1854), M. compares himself with Phineus, quoting the account of the prophet's blindness in the Argonautica of Apollonius Rhodius."

* See his As You Like It, prepared for use in Schools and Families.

"As to the language part of the exercise, this is chiefly concerned with the meaning and force of the Poet's words, but also enters more or less into sundry points of grammar, word-growth, prosody, and rhetoric, making the whole as little technical as possible. And I use, or aim to use, all this for the one sole purpose of getting the pupils to understand what is immediately before them, not looking at all to any lingual or philological purposes lying beyond the matter directly in hand. And here I take the utmost care not to push the part of verbal comment and explanation so long or so far as to become dull and tedious to the pupils. For as I wish them to study Shakespeare, simply that they may learn to understand and to love his poetry itself, so I must and will have them take pleasure in the process; and people are not apt to fall or to grow in love with things that bore them. I would much rather they should not fully understand his thought, or not take in the full sense of his lines, than that they should feel anything of weariness or disgust in the study; for the defect of present comprehension can easily be repaired in the future, but not so the disgust. If they really love the poetry, and find it pleasant to their souls, I'll risk the rest."*

It must be remembered that, for the time, we are dealing with schools, and not with colleges and universities. And for schools Mr. Hudson puts the mark high enough. In the higher institutions of learning, much more can be undertaken and accomplished. It is to this more advanced stage of instruction that I should refer nearly all of the admirable suggestions of method found in Mr. J. C. Collins's Study of English Literature, although the secondary school teacher may read the book with great advantage.†

* P. xii. † See particularly pp. 51–53.

Within the limits defined there is room for a variety of exercises, or rather of questions. How far the study of words, grammatical analysis, historical illustration, and the like shall be carried is partly a question of time and place. How proficient are the pupils? How much time is assigned to the subject? Very often subordinate ends are essential to the accomplishment of the main purpose. Lexical questions, grammatical questions, rhetorical questions, historical facts, and facts of Nature must be supplied in order that the content of the passage or lesson may be reached. Sometimes the general grammatical framework of a paragraph or composition may be considered. If the aim is to dwell upon a piece until it is thoroughly understood, then questions and explanations must be multiplied until that end is reached. But the main rule is this: In teaching literature, questions and illustrations must be subordinate to the development of the literary elements of the composition. Many things can be taught *about* literature without actually teaching it. Professor Corson contends that "a sufficiently qualified teacher could arrive at a nicer and more certain estimate of what a student has appreciated, both intellectually and æsthetically, of a literary product, or any portion of a literary product, by requiring him to read it, than he could arrive at through any amount of catechising.*

Sometimes it is asked whether it is better to study a few compositions very thoroughly or many compositions less thoroughly. In my view the proper plan is to combine the two ideas, taking pains, however, to give the major part of the time to the more general and discursive work. The one exercise will give depth, the other breadth. The occasional study of a composition intensively is

* Atlantic Monthly, June, 1895, p. 812.

strongly to be recommended. What I mean is to study, say, L'Allegro or a play of Shakespeare, with a view of getting out of it all there is in it. Still, it is not true that "all is in all." Bacon's generalization—some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested—is a good rule for the schoolroom. If we select only books of his third class, much of the chewing and digesting must be deferred until the school has been left behind. The saying that "the child should pass by nothing without thoroughly understanding it," is one of those pedagogical half-truths that are so current, like the maxim "Never tell the child anything that he can find out for himself."

Mr. Hudson protests vigorously against making literature a subject for recitation.* This is right, provided we are to take the word "recitation" in its strict sense. He recommends what he calls "exercises," "the pupils reading the author under the direction, correction, and explanation of the teacher. The thing is to have the pupils, with the teacher's help and guidance, commune with the author while in class, and quietly drink in the sense and spirit of his workmanship." Such exercises, however, should be supplemented by summaries, arguments, and written essays on selected points of interest. It follows that, as a rule, the pupils will answer their questions with

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*Professor Laurie demands, "Why do so many teachers make lessons of everything?" He protests against the "dissection" of a great writer, and indignantly asks: "How can you expect any one to enjoy Lycidas, or Portia's speech, or Hamlet's soliloquy, or Tintern Abbey, or the Ode to Duty, if they read ten lines a day—have to learn by heart a lot of notes (philological and antiquarian), and then begin to mangle the passages by constructing parsing and analysis tables—finally, perhaps, resorting to the degrading process of paraphrasing?"—(P. 115.)

their texts open before them. To compel them to *cram up* for the exercise would defeat the whole purpose. Mr. Hudson does not require, but commonly advises, his pupils to read the author before coming to the exercise. "Such preparation is indeed well, but not necessary." On this point the best teachers will hardly agree with him. As much as any exercise, literature needs preparation. The ill adaptation of the real study of literature to the purposes of the conventional recitation is one reason why so little of it has hitherto been found in the schools. Many teachers can grind on grammar, philology, or definitions, who do not see their way to teaching the conceptions of individual minds expressed in a permanent form of words.

What has been said about recitations leads directly to another matter. Professor Laurie charges the Oxford dons with mistaking the question, "Can literature be taught?" for the question, "Can literature be examined on?" The distinction is an important one, and the mistake is by no means confined to Oxford. Literature is a poor subject for the conventional examiner, just as it is a poor subject for the teacher who spends his time in merely hearing lessons. It is too indefinite and intangible. You can examine on the history of literature and ask many important questions about literary masterpieces, but how can you reach the mental growth that comes to the mind from silently feeding on ideas and beauty? The results of the study will declare themselves to the discerning in time, but they can not be summed up at the end of the term in an examination paper.

Of course, I do not mean that literature, as such, can not be examined on. I mean only that the examiner must not look for such an examination as he would expect in science, in mathematics, or even in the classical and mod-

ern literatures. He must adapt his questions to the real nature of the work; must take into account the writer's aim, sources, and execution; must look to connections of thought, to cause and effect, to scope and tendency, and must expect general rather than specific answers. The process will test the pupil's grasp of mind and literary appreciation rather than his technical knowledge. It can not be doubted, either, that the ill adaptation of literature to the purposes of strict examination has had a marked effect in turning teachers of the subject to grammar and philology, and that it was formerly influential in causing the history of literature to be preferred to literature itself as a subject of school study. It is so difficult for many minds to believe that any valuable education work is being done, unless it can be measured out in examination papers!

Good sense protests, too, against the foolish haste and impatience that play so large a part in American education. In no other subject, perhaps, is it so important for parent, teacher, or pupil to be content to abide his time. Some one has compared the constant questioning of a child about a fact or an idea that has found lodgment in his mind to pulling up the beanstalks in the garden to see whether they are growing. I am not quite sure that the analogy is a happy one, but if it holds anywhere it holds in teaching literature. It may be a question whether the doctrine of natural or negative education, which Rousseau carried to such an absurd extent, be not a needed correction of our self-conscious processes. We express our pedagogical ideas in metaphors that react upon our ideas, and so influence practice. The conception of education as *exercise* resulting in strength needs to be supplemented by the conception of education as *feeding* resulting in growth. The processes of real culture are deep, silent, and uncon-

scious; that is the least valuable part of an education which is most on the surface; and the strongest argument that can be advanced for teaching literature is the fact that thus a habit will be formed and some material accumulated which will support and gladden life when pupils have passed out of the school into the world, and have forgotten their more technical studies.

It happened that the history of literature got into the schools before literature itself. This was due to a variety of causes, some of which have been suggested. Shaw's Outlines of English Literature was the pioneer book in the field. This was all wrong. "Matter before form" is a sound maxim, and to-day, if time can be found for only one of the subjects, literature should by all means have the right of way. Fortunately, the needed correction has now been made: literature is in the schools. Still, it is desirable to teach the history in a systematic way. It would hardly suffice to rely on such facts as would be taught, or could be taught, in connection with the works studied. The subject should be presented connectedly, in outline, and may fairly embrace authors whose works pupils have not studied, provided they have studied other authors in sufficient number.* But it must not be forgotten that literature and the history of literature are different though related subjects.

I do not feel called upon to say how much time should be allotted to English literature, either in elementary grades or in high schools, and much less to lay out a course of study. My object is a more general and strictly pedagogical one. Besides, those questions have been often answered by the most competent experts. But I do deem it pertinent to offer one or two observations on the kind

* Stopford Brooke's Primer will well answer for an outline.

of literature that should be chosen for high-school use. If this use is properly regulated, there will be little trouble in the grades below.

Observation has led me to the conclusion that teachers are sometimes too ambitious, attempting compositions that are too difficult for their pupils. Of Shakespeare, the second-grade plays should be preferred to the first-grade ones: Twelfth Night, The Merchant of Venice, As You Like It, A Midsummer-Night's Dream, and Julius Cæsar should precede Othello, Macbeth, and Hamlet. The great Shakespearean tragedies are psychological and ethical studies too profound for the high-school grade of mind. Something the same may be said of Hawthorne—choose the minor books rather than the major ones. Emerson I have found in high schools, where he is entirely out of place. If selections are made from Carlyle, they should be essays that he wrote before he developed those extreme mannerisms of thought and diction which so strongly mark his later writings. Burke and Webster should be used with judgment. The Speech on Conciliation of America should be preferred to The Speech on the Nabob of Arcot's Debts, or The Reflections on the French Revolution. The same may be said of Webster's First Bunker Hill Oration and Reply to Hayne or his great legal arguments. Addison's and Irving's best papers, Macaulay's best essays, Longfellow's poems, Scott's novels and poems, Goldsmith, Milton's minor poems—these are sources little likely to be too largely drawn upon in schools.

I have not thought it necessary to make a direct or formal argument showing that it is desirable to have literature taught in the schools of the country. Much of the present chapter is indirectly an argument for such teaching. But it should be said that literature has a distinct

place and a large place in education. Science brings the pupil into contact with the facts and laws of surrounding Nature. Philosophy spreads before him the facts and laws of his own being. Mathematics opens the door leading to the great world of quantity and so of measurement. History unrolls the scroll of human events, and is occupied with probable knowledge. Language and grammar deal with the mechanism of thought, and so involve its nature and laws. Art is the study of beauty in objective forms. Literature is occupied with the human spirit as expressed in language. It is humanity. Its subject-matter is the conceptions of individual minds put in permanent forms of words. As Matthew Arnold said, it consists of the best things that men have thought and said. And, to state what literature is, is to assign the best of all reasons why it should be taught in schools. As said before, the public schools of the United States now cost the people $170,000,000 a year, by far the largest sum ever expended by a single nation for such a purpose; but the schools earn the money, provided they do measurably well these three things only: Teach the children of the land how to read, teach them what to read, and give them a love for what is good in English literature.

The occasional study of a lesson intensively has been recommended. Such work will naturally take a wider range than purely literary study. Questions in grammar will often serve as keys to successful interpretation. This chapter may fitly close with an illustrative lesson.

Lines from L'Allegro.

1. Haste thee, Nymph, and bring with thee
2. Jest and youthful Jollity,
3. Quips and cranks and wanton wiles,
4. Nods and becks and wreathèd smiles,

Such as hang on Hebe's cheek,
And love to live in dimple sleek;
Sport that wrinkled Care derides,
And Laughter holding both his sides.
Come, and trip it, as you go,
On the light fantastic toe;
And in thy right hand lead with thee
The mountain nymph, sweet Liberty;
And, if I give thee honour due,
Mirth, admit me of thy crew,
To live with her, and live with thee,
In unreprovèd pleasures free;
To hear the lark begin his flight,
And, singing, startle the dull night,
From his watchtower in the skies,
Till the dappled dawn doth rise;
Then to come, in spite of sorrow,
And at my window bid good-morrow,
Through the sweetbrier or the vine,
Or the twisted eglantine,
While the cock, with lively din,
Scatters the rear of darkness thin;
And to the stack, or the barn door,
Stoutly struts his dames before;
Oft listening how the hounds and horn
Cheerly rouse the slumbering morn,
From the side of some hoar hill,
Through the high wood echoing shrill:
Sometimes walking, not unseen,
By hedgerow elms, on hillocks green,
Right against the eastern gate,
Where the great Sun begins his state,
Robed in flames and amber light,
The clouds in thousand liveries dight;
While the ploughman, near at hand,
Whistles o'er the furrowed land,
And the milkmaid singeth blithe,
And the mower whets his scythe,
And every shepherd tells his tale
Under the hawthorn in the dale.

These lines suggest many interesting questions as to the meaning and form of words, the force of expressions, and the nature and connection of the thought. The following are given :—

1. What is a nymph? How many nymphs are mentioned in the exercise? What are their names? Why is the second one called by the name given to her?

2. How many syllables in "wreathèd," line 4, and why?

3. What is the construction of the nouns in lines 2, 3, 4? Why are these things in particular mentioned? Who is Hebe? And why is she here introduced?

5. Why do "sport" and "care," line 7, begin with capitals? What is the subject of "deride," same line, and why do you think so?

6. Why is "Laughter" presented as holding his sides?

7. Line 9, who is to come?

8. Explain "fantastic toe," line 10.

9. Give the construction of "me," line 14.

10. What do "to live," line 15, "to hear," line 17, and "to come," line 21, modify?

11. Answer the same questions for "listening," line 29, and "walking," line 33.

12. How can one hear a lark "begin" his flight, line 17?

13. Explain "startle the dull night."

14. What idea do you get from "watchtower," line 19? Whose watchtower is it?

15. Explain the expression "dapple dawn," line 20.

16. Explain lines 21–24.

17. What clauses are introduced by "while," lines 25 and 39? and how far does the force of the adverb extend in either case?

18. What does the poet mean by line 26?

19. Explain line 30.

20. What is the "hoar hill" of line 31?

21. Why does the poet introduce the expression "not unseen," line 33? To whom does it relate?

22. Explain the expression "eastern gate," line 35.

23. Why is light called "amber," line 37?

24. Line 38, what is the meaning of "dight"?

25. What is the meaning of "furrowed land," line 40?

26. What picture do you get from lines 33–38?

27. Explain the last two lines of the exercise.

28. Point out the lines that give the finest picture in the above exercise.

29. What contrast do you observe in the pictures presented in lines 33–38, and 39–44?

More general questions than these may be asked, provided they are within the student's range of knowledge. Who wrote L'Allegro? Name the companion poem. What do the two names mean? Show that the names are descriptive of the poems. Show that the machinery, the scenery, and the tone of the two poems are consonant with the two leading thoughts of the poet. Why does the poet in L'Allegro take morning for the time of the scene? Why in the companion poem night?

How many questions should be asked on a lesson is a matter of judgment. It will be observed that the above is not given as a model for the daily lesson, but as a model of an occasional intensive lesson. In these matters nothing can take the place of good sense in the teacher.

NOTE.—Remarking upon the tendency to bury the literary masterpieces under wagon-loads of commentary and discussion, Mr. Frederic Harrison exclaims: "Alas! the Paradise Lost is lost again to us beneath an inundation of graceful academic verse, sugary stanzas of ladylike prettiness, and ceaseless explanations in more or less readable prose of what John Milton meant or did not mean, or what he saw or did not see, who married his great-aunt,

and why Adam or Satan is like that or unlike the other. We read a perfect library about the Paradise Lost, but the Paradise Lost itself we do not read."(—The Choice of Books, p. 14.)

At the same time, Professor Corson, who can hardly find words to express his disapproval of that study of literature which sticks in the bark and multiplies useless questions, still holds that the grammar of a poem is an element in its study. "In Gray's Elegy," he says, "there are several grammatical constructions which need to be particularly looked into." He quotes these stanzas—

> "But in dark corners of her palace stood
> Uncertain shapes; and unawares
> On white-eyed phantasms weeping tears of blood,
> And horrible nightmares,
>
> "And hollow shades enclosing hearts of flame
> And, with dim-greeted foreheads all,
> On corpses three months old, at noon she came,
> That stood against the wall"—

and remarks that "the adverb 'unawares' in the first of these stanzas qualifies 'came' in the second, they being separated to the extent of five verses; 'came' is the antecedent of the preposition 'on,' immediately following 'unawares.' The relative clause 'that stood against the wall' is separated from its antecedent 'corpses' by the predication 'at noon she came.'"—(Atlantic Monthly, June, 1895, p. 812; The Aims of Literary Study, pp. 129–130.)

CHAPTER XVI.

THE FUNCTION OF ENGLISH GRAMMAR.

HELPFUL pedagogical discussion of English grammar must take account of the nature of grammar in general. What is grammar? What is its educational function or value? Why should English grammar be taught in the schools of the country?

Unfortunately, antiquity gives us little assistance in answering these questions. Dionysius Thrax, an Alexandrian who taught Greek in Rome in the time of Pompey the Great, and who wrote the first practical Greek grammar, and in fact the first practical grammar of any kind, that has come down to us, gave this definition:

"Grammar is an experimental knowledge of the usages of language as generally current among poets and prose writers. It is divided into six parts: (1) Trained reading, with due regard to prosody [i. e., aspiration, accentuation, quantity, emphasis, metre, etc.]; (2) exposition according to poetic figures [literary criticism]; (3) ready statement of dialectical peculiarities and allusions [philology, geography, history, mythology]; (4) discovery of etymologies; (5) accurate account of analogies [accidence and syntax]; (6) criticism of poetical productions, which is the noblest part of the grammatic art [ethics, politics, strategy, etc.]." *

* Davidson: Aristotle and Ancient Educational Ideals, p. 214. A translation of the Grammar of Dionysius Thrax, by Thomas

The general definition we might accept, but Thrax's analysis is far too comprehensive; it includes not merely what we call grammar, but also artistic reading, literary criticism, philology, etc., and the discussion of poetical productions. Still, Thrax was only following the usage current among the Greeks. Γραμματική, as taught by the γραμματικός, was the comprehensive study of literature. The more elementary part of the subject was sometimes called γραμματιστική, and was taught by the γραμματιστής, while the more general name was reserved for the nobler portions. In this matter, as in so many others, the Romans followed the Greeks. Quintilian says the boy who has attained facility in reading and writing should next take up the grammarians, by which he means the teachers of language and literature. He divides grammar into "the art of speaking correctly, and the illustration of the poets," including speaking in writing. In his exposition of the second division, conformably to the general habit of his mind, he includes the prose writers as well as the poets, and mentions music, astronomy, philosophy, and eloquence as falling within the purview of grammar. Were we to accept his scheme, we should certainly agree with him that no man should "look down on the elements of grammar as small matters; . . . to those entering the recesses, as it were, of this temple there will appear much sympathy on points which may not only sharpen the wits of boys, but may exercise even the deepest erudition and knowledge." *

In the main, antiquity settled the usage for the middle ages. Still, there was a considerable contraction of the

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Davidson, with notes, will be found in The Journal of Speculative Philosophy, vol. viii, pp. 326–339. See also Max Müller, Lectures on the Science of Language, first series, lecture iii.

* Institutes of Oratory, i, iv, 1, 2, 6.

field; grammar was put in the *trivium*, not the *quadrivium*. It was considered a formal and not a real study, which was in perfect accord with the tendencies of the times.

It is easy to see why grammar, as the Greeks and Latins understood it, should be taught in schools, but not so easy to see why it should be so taught when we limit it as we are in the habit of doing to-day. This is the somewhat difficult question that we are now to consider.

Lindley Murray, whose English Grammar first appeared in 1795, gave this definition: "English grammar is the art of speaking and writing the English language with propriety." I quote this book because it was more generally used in its time, both in England and America, than any similar book ever written; because it exercised a great influence upon succeeding writers, and because in respect to its view of the subject it fairly represented the grammatical tradition that had been delivered to its author.

Kirkham's English Grammar, first published in 1823, succeeded Murray's in the schools of the United States. Kirkham first defines grammar as the science of language, and then on the opposite side of the same leaf says, "English grammar is the art of speaking and writing the English language with propriety." No better illustration than this could be given of the confusion that has reigned in men's minds on this subject. In treatment, Kirkham followed Murray slavishly.*

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*It is not improbable that modern definitions of grammar, as well as of other sciences, have been influenced by the ancient use of the word "art." "It must be borne in mind," remarks Professor Davidson, "that the Greek τέχνη, art, corresponds almost exactly to what we mean by science."—Aristotle and Ancient Educational Ideals, p. 289, note. The same may be said of the Latin *ars*, at least in relation to the higher education.

As remarked in Chapter I, it is now well understood by competent scholars and teachers that the traditionary definition of grammar is false, and that the traditionary mode of teaching it is of little practical value. As to the second point, two or three facts are decisive. One is that good speakers and writers are not consciously guided in their use of the vernacular by grammatical definitions and rules. Another is that many good speakers and writers have never learned or even studied grammar at all. This was emphatically the case in antiquity, when grammar as we teach it was unknown. Another fact is that a knowledge of grammar is no guarantee of propriety in either speech or writing. It would be hard to say whether those who speak and write good English, but who can not parse, or those who parse well, but can not speak or write good English, is the more numerous host. Men learn to use their vernacular by using it; the controlling factors are imitation and habit working through association and literature. Speech and writing are arts, and must be learned by speaking and writing. The rule is, that those persons who habitually hear good language spoken, and who habitually read good literature, learn to speak with propriety. Dr. Fitch is nearly right when he says that whoever tries to learn or to teach grammar as an art is doomed to disappointment. "No doubt there is a sense, and a very true sense," says he, "in which all careful investigation into the structure of words and their relations gives precision to speech. But this is an indirect process. The direct operation and use of grammar rules in improving our speech and making it correct can hardly be said to exist at all." *

I deem it important still further to fortify this

* Lectures on Teaching, iv.

main position. Professor W. D. Whitney bears this testimony:

"That the leading object of the study of English grammar is to teach the correct use of English, is, in my view, an error, and one which is gradually becoming removed, giving way to the sounder opinion that grammar is the reflective study of language, for a variety of purposes, of which correctness in writing is only one, and a secondary or subordinate one—by no means unimportant, but best attained when sought indirectly. It should be a pervading element in the whole school and home training of the young to make them use their own tongue with accuracy and force; and, along with any special drilling directed to this end, some of the rudimentary distinctions and rules of grammar are conveniently taught; but that is not the study of grammar, and it will not bear the intrusion of much formal grammar without being spoiled for its own ends. It is constant use and practice, under never-failing watch and correction, that make good writers and speakers; the application of direct authority is the most efficient corrective. Grammar has its part to contribute, but rather in the higher than in the lower stages of the work. One must be a somewhat reflective user of language to amend even here and there a point by grammatical reasons, and no one ever changed from a bad speaker to a good one by applying the rules of grammar to what he said." *

Mr. Herbert Spencer enlarges the view so as to include rhetoric.

"As Dr. Latham, condemning the usual school drill in Lindley Murray, rightly remarks, 'Gross vulgarity is a fault to be prevented, but the proper prevention is to be got from habit—not rules.' Similarly there can be

* Preface to Essentials of English Grammar.

little question that good composition is far less dependent upon acquaintance with its laws than upon practice and natural aptitude. A clear head, a quick imagination, and a sensitive ear will go far toward making all rhetorical precepts needless. He who daily hears and reads well-framed sentences will naturally, more or less, tend to use similar ones. And where there exists any mental idiosyncrasy—where there is a deficient verbal memory, or an inadequate sense of logical dependence, or but little perception of order, or a lack of constructive ingenuity—no amount of instruction will remedy the defect. Nevertheless, some practical result may be expected from a familiarity with the principles of style. The endeavour to conform to laws may tell, though slowly. And if in no other way, yet, as facilitating revision, a knowledge of the thing to be achieved—a clear idea of what constitutes a beauty, and what a blemish—can not fail to be of service." *

Professor Whitney tells us that grammar is the reflective study of language; that is, grammar is the science of language, the laws of correct expression. Or, to quote his technical definition: "English grammar may be defined as a description of those usages of the English language which are now approved by the best writers and speakers."

The old writers set the example of dividing English grammar into four parts—Orthography, Etymology, Syntax, and Prosody—and the new ones commonly followed their example. The first and last of these divisions have nothing whatever to do with the subject; the only reasons for including them in the text-book are tradition and the fact that they contain a certain amount of useful information about the English language that authors do not know what else to do with. Grammar is limited to etymology,

* The Philosophy of Style.

or the doctrine of words, and to syntax, or the doctrine of sentences.

Two causes conspired to break down the authority of the scholastic grammar. One was the conviction borne in upon teachers that it was largely barren of practical result; the other, the discovery that English grammar to a great extent is an artificial and fictitious creation. This discovery came about through the application to the language of scientific method. The traditionary English grammar was created, not by an original inquiry concerning the nature of the English language, but by imitating Latin grammar. "The manuals by which grammar was first taught in English were not properly English grammars. They were translations of the Latin accidence, and were designed to aid British youth in acquiring knowledge of the Latin language rather than accuracy in the use of their own. Two languages were often combined in one book, for the purpose of teaching sometimes both together and sometimes one through the other." * One of the first, and perhaps the most celebrated of these books, was attributed to William Lily, although it appears to have been the work of a plurality of authors. It was called "King Henry's Grammar," from the fact that Henry VIII commanded it to be taught throughout his realm as the common study of grammatical construction. So powerful was the Latin tradition, and so imperfect the current knowledge of English, that even scholars failed to see that, save in a general sense, Latin grammar could not be a model for English grammar.

For example, in the matter of accidence Latin is called an inflected, English a non-inflected, language. Anglo-Saxon, which furnishes the framework of English and a

* Brown: The Grammar of English Grammars, chap. ix.

large part of its vocabulary, was an inflected language, but many of its inflections have been worn away, and nothing has taken their place. Naturalized Latin and Greek words have lost nearly all their original inflections, and become assimilated to the body of the language. As a result, what are called "agreement" and "government" have fared hardly in the wear and tear of a thousand years. A great number of the distinctions that the old grammarians made, on the assumption that English grammar must conform to the Latin model, have no existence in fact. We still go through the motions of saying, "I love, you love, he loves, we love, you love, they love"; nevertheless, there are here only two forms, while the Latin verb in the same mode and tense makes six. Still more artificial does the conjugation-system appear when we take into account the modes and tenses. Then we decline nouns making their plural in *s* or *es* as though there were six forms, while in reality there are but two. The personal pronoun alone offers a resemblance somewhat close to the Latin accidence, *he*, *his*, *him*, while the adjective offers the widest possible departure from it.

Similar were the results when men came to study more thoroughly English syntax. They now saw that many of the relations summed up in the traditionary rules exist only in name. Take, for example, Kirkham's Rule III, "The nominative case governs the verb," and his Rule IV, "The verb must agree with its nominative in number and person." In Latin these rules mean that there is a certain correspondence in form between the noun and the verb when one is the subject and the other the predicate of the sentence, but in English the most that they can mean is that *occasionally* this is true, while in most cases it is not true. These rules absolutely express no facts whatever when they are applied to the past and the future

tenses of the verb. Much the same is true of Rule XIII, "Personal pronouns must agree with the nouns for which they stand in gender and number," and Rule XIV, "Relative pronouns agree with their antecedents in gender, person, and number." Rule XX, "Active transitive verbs govern the objective case," would mean in Latin that such a verb would control the form of the noun immediately dependent upon it; in English it means either nothing or something wholly different. In fact, there is hardly a shred of meaning in the doctrine of English case, provided we take the word in the Latin sense. In the classical languages the cases are departures or variations of substantives and adjectives from their first or normal forms, said departures expressing certain relations of thought;* but in English case has been commonly based on another idea than form. Thus Kirkham: "Case, when applied to nouns and pronouns, means the different state, situation, or position they have in relation to other words." Since form is so slight a factor in the English cases it is natural that there should be, as there is, a difference of opinion as to the number of cases in English grammar. In Latin or

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* "By Aristotle πτῶσις was applied to any derived, inflected, or extended form of the simple ὄνομα or ῥῆμα (i. e., the nominative of nouns, the present indicative of verbs), such as the oblique cases of nouns, the variations of adjectives due to gender and comparison, also the derived adverb (e. g., δικαιῶς was a πτῶσις of δίκαιος), the other tenses and modes of the verb, including also its interrogative form. The grammarians, following the Stoics, restricted πτῶσις to nouns, and included the nominative under the designation."—(Dr. Murray: A New English Dictionary.)

Πτῶσις is derived from πίπτω, πίπτειν, to fall, and means, first, a falling or fall, and secondly, a grammatical inflection, as just explained. The Romans translated the word by *casus* from *cado, cadere.* Hence our word *case.* The original idea was that a case was a departure or falling away from some standard or first form.

Greek, or in any language, where the form decides, such a question could not possibly arise.

Not only has the authority of the scholastic English grammar been pretty thoroughly broken down, but the teaching of English grammar in the schools has been discredited. While it has not been thrown out of the schools generally, it has become less prominent, and the question is often asked why it should be retained at all. Accordingly, those who believe in its retention are called upon to bring forth their strong reasons.

1. English grammar puts the pupil in possession of much interesting knowledge pertaining to the vernacular. That would be a mistaken education which, while furnishing the mind with a store of facts concerning material things, human life, history, and the like, should wholly neglect the vesture in which these facts are clothed. Grammatical facts are mental facts, and it is certainly as well worth one's while to know that he expresses his thoughts in nouns, verbs, etc., as it is to know the names and properties of strange plants and animals. As Mr. Metcalfe says in the preface to his English Grammar: "In one who claims to be a scholar ignorance of the history and structure of his language is no more excusable than ignorance in any other department of knowledge."

2. Like the other sciences, grammar has disciplinary value. The study involves a peculiar exercise of the powers of observation—the forms of words, idioms, and sentences, and of the realities that are behind them, distinctions, meanings, and relations. These forms and relations develop a kind of sense or perception that external objects do not develop. Secondly, the study involves also a vigorous exercise of the logical powers—analysis, abstraction, comparison, inference. Grammar is the application of logic to a large and important class of facts. The powers

of thought are developed by studying the relations of objects, external and internal. The first rank far below the second in educational value. It is only when we can employ thought upon general relations, which are always abstract, that we begin to *un*sense or *de*materialize the mind, and so introduce it to the sphere of scientific thinking. The best meter of intellectual power is one's ability to think general thoughts. Nothing is more characteristic of the immature mind than the habit of *thinging*—that is, of thinking in the forms of sense-objects or things, concrete and particular. Power of abstract thought is promoted most directly and effectively, as Professor Laurie says, "by formal or abstract studies, such as arithmetic, mathematics, grammar, logic; and this because the occupation of the mind with the abstract is the nearest approach to the occupation of the mind with itself as an organism of thinking."* Grammar is indeed the only metaphysical study that a large majority of people ever pursue; and if that would be a defective information which ignored the facts of language, *a fortiori* would that be a defective discipline which omitted its relations.

Still another point may be urged. It is sometimes said by those who wish to distinguish English from the highly inflected tongues, that it is a grammarless language. The fact is rather that its grammar is peculiar and characteristic. In the classical languages, relations are generally expressed by means of forms called "endings," the position of words in the sentence having little to do with meanings. No matter in what order we place the words *puer*, *puellam*, *amat*, in a sentence, they mean the same thing, and can mean nothing else; while the corresponding English words, to be perfectly clear, must stand

* Lectures on Linguistic Method, p. 52.

in one certain order. The Greek and Latin constructions are, so to speak, framed into one another like pieces of timber in a building, and it is either hard or impossible to mistake the principal relations of the sentence. But since thought relations in English are so largely dependent upon the position of words and the spirit of the passage, as compared with the more mechanical languages, its grammar is peculiarly valuable as a discipline. As one has said, "The grammar of English is a very subtle grammar, and its usages, if difficult to register, demand all the more investigation and study." This pertinent passage is from John Stuart Mill:

"Consider for a moment what grammar is. It is the most elementary part of logic. It is the beginning of the analysis of the thinking process. The principles and rules of grammar are the means by which the forms of language are made to correspond with the universal forms of thought. The distinctions between the various parts of speech, between the cases of nouns, the moods and tenses of verbs, the functions of particles, are distinctions in thought, not merely in words. Single nouns and verbs express objects and events, many of which can be cognised by the senses; but the modes of putting nouns and verbs together express the relations of objects and events, which can be cognised only by the intellect; and each different mode corresponds to a different relation. The structure of every sentence is a lesson in logic." *

It is in the line of discipline that Professor Greene's reasons for "studying grammar, or rather language through the structure of sentences," mainly run, e. g.: "As a sentence is the expression of a thought, and as the elements of a sentence are expressions for the elements of thought,

* Inaugural Address at St. Andrews.

the pupil who is taught to separate a sentence into its elements is learning to analyze thought, and consequently to think." *

3. Grammar, then, is the logic of speech. The basis of grammatical analysis is logical analysis. Grammar is the form that logic assumes in the interpretation or construction of language, and so is the only strictly logical study with which most persons who attend school ever form a practical acquaintance. It does not deal merely with single words, but also with combinations of words. It hinges upon relations, no matter whether these are expressed by means of inflections or by other devices. In fact, grammar is in some respects a more searching investigation of thought than logic itself, because it embraces all the modifications of thought expressed in the proposition, while logic embraces only the essential relations. Hence, the relations of grammar to all kinds of hermeneutics, or interpretation, are commonplaces. Melanchthon wrote, "Scripture can not be understood theologically unless it is understood grammatically." Luther held that true theology was merely an application of grammar, and Scaliger maintained that ignorance of grammar was the cause of all religious differences. And so in jurisprudence the legal sense of language is the grammatical sense. Montaigne even expressed the opinion that most of the occasions of disturbance in the world are grammatical ones. It is not meant, of course, that a great theologian, or a great jurist, is necessarily a great technical grammarian, any more than that he is necessarily a great formal logician; the meaning is, rather, that such theologian or jurist must needs be a master of those methods or habits of thought which constitute the foundation of

* See preface to his English Analysis.

grammar and logic. Still less is it meant that the study of grammar can take the place of native capacity for interpretation; as well say that a blind man can use a telescope to advantage as that logic is a substitute for power to think.

4. In a previous chapter some remarks were made about etymologies and words as sources of history. These topics are phases of historical grammar, which has come to be such an important subject of investigation. The Conference on English, so frequently referred to in these pages, recommends that, in the high school, attention shall be paid to the history and geography of the English-speaking people so far as these illustrate the development of the English language.* Something of this work can be well done if made sufficiently elementary. Moreover, it is easy to connect the history of language with history in general, and with historical geography, which draws so largely upon language and is so fruitful of interest.† The extent to which the historical and comparative study of English can be profitably carried on will turn largely, of course, upon the extent to which the pupil enters into the study of foreign languages.

5. Thus far we have not discovered any direct practical connection between the study of English grammar and the use of the English language. It may be fairly urged, however, that any activity of mind which enlists clear thinking is sure more or less to influence the language in which the thinking is not only expressed, but in fact carried on. Still more, such effect is likely to be marked when the subject-matter of thought is thought-

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* Report of Committee of Ten, pp. 91, 92.

† See Taylor: Names and Places; Blackie: Historical Geography; Hinsdale: How to Study and Teach History, chaps. xiii, xiv.

processes and their expression. If Dr. Blair is right in saying that learning to compose with accuracy is learning to think with accuracy, and Professor Greene in saying that the pupil who is taught to separate a sentence into its elements is learning to analyze thought, and so to think, —then, conversely, learning to think and to analyze are learning to compose. Professor Laurie declares the practical use of English grammar to be, first, the enabling a pupil the better to grasp the language of literature; and, secondly, the enabling him better to express his own experience and thoughts, when he has any thoughts to express. He also contends that early "a child should, by the help of numerous examples, be taught to recognise the subject and the predication regarding it—the whole logical subject, that is to say, and the whole predicate—as going to constitute a sentence or proposition. This formal condition of a possible sentence can not only be taught very early, but it is for practical reasons desirable to teach it early. A recognition of this fundamental fact of both grammar and logic is very helpful in enabling children to understand what they read, and to express what they desire to express." * This is the first grammatical fact to be taught—that no thought can be expressed unless something is said of something; nor can this fact be properly taught without the development of some skill in detecting these essential elements, the subject and the predicate of the sentence.

6. The idea that the old grammarians put first has been reserved for the last, viz., the relation of the study of grammar to the student's use of the vernacular.

Professor Whitney says that, in connection with special drill looking to accuracy and force in the use of speech,

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* Lectures on Linguistic Method, p. 56.

some of the rudimentary distinctions and rules of grammar are conveniently taught. He does not say that constant use and practice will make good speakers and writers, but constant use and practice *under never-failing watch and correction.* The application of direct authority, he says, is the most efficient corrective. Three things are obvious: that watch and correction are essential; that there must be a standard of judgment; and that this standard must at first be furnished by a living agent or other example. What Mr. Spencer says of rhetoric is just as true of grammar: some practical result may be expected from a familiarity with principles; the endeavour to conform to laws will tell, though slowly; and if in no other way, yet as facilitating revision, a knowledge of the thing to be achieved—a clear knowledge of what is accuracy and what is inaccuracy—can not fail to be of service. How much room there is for the exemplification of these ideas in teaching English, a little consideration will show.

No matter how good one's opportunities to acquire the vernacular in childhood may be, he is almost certain to form some erroneous habits. These originate partly in imitation and partly in the nature of our language. The idea of regularity seizes the child's mind at an early age. He becomes entangled in the irregular verbs, and in the nouns and pronouns. In households and in primary schools such errors will disappear in great part under the discipline of correction, but not wholly so. Few persons can be found who do not need that discipline of self-criticism which accompanies the study of grammar when properly taught. What has just been said is more and more applicable as we descend the scale of intelligence and cultivation. A great majority of children who come from homes that are accounted intelligent, and that are really so measured by a practical standard, bring with them

to school numerous errors of pronunciation, etymology, and syntax, to say nothing of spelling, many of which are downright barbarisms and vulgarisms. To the still lower stratum of cultivation we do not need to go. Now, what can be done for these children? First, those agencies that affect language unconsciously must be stimulated; interest the child in good conversation, in good public discourse, and in well-written books, thus putting him in the way of sloughing off or growing out of some of his bad habits. Secondly, give him the benefit of the special drill and the never-failing watch and correction of which Professor Whitney speaks. For some years mere authority must prevail, but in time both rule and reason will play their part. Criticism will tend to impair somewhat that spontaneity which is essential to good expression, whether in talking, reading, or writing; but it will not answer to allow bad grammar to run riot in the name of spontaneity. The critical faculty should be keenly stimulated, involving the two elements of observation and correction. Nor should it be forgotten that the most helpful criticism is self-criticism, although it may not begin there.

Something should be said of the correction of false syntax. Language is so largely a matter of imitation that it is folly to set persons who are forming their linguistic habits to correct errors to which they are not exposed. The current mode of teaching orthography is by way of the form-image presented to the eye; written spelling is the vogue, and it is accounted bad practice to use copy that will serve to print false pictures on the mind. In learning to speak the vernacular, the sound-image is the great agent, and this is subject to the limitation before stated. The application of this principle to false syntax is obvious. No doubt these exercises, when intelligently conducted, tend to make the pupil observant and critical,

but they may also tend to propagate the very errors that are corrected. As a matter of fact, however, the work is often unintelligible; the pupil assumes that an example is faulty because it is found in bad company, and then guesses at the correction. Correction of bad syntax and of bad etymology should therefore be limited to errors to which the pupil is addicted or exposed. Real life will furnish the teacher an abundance of the very best material; book "false syntax," to put it mildly, is of doubtful utility in the case of pupils who are studying grammar for a practical purpose.

Such are the reasons that may be assigned for teaching grammar in elementary schools. Obviously, the advantages set forth can be attained only when the teacher intelligently answers the questions: When? How much? What method? Professor Laurie contends that the method of procedure must be real.

"To be of any utility, either as a discipline, or as training, or as knowledge, grammar and rhetoric have to be studied through examples. Grammar has to be studied in and through sentences, and to be extracted from sentences by the pupil, if it is to be really taught; and so also rhetoric has to be studied in and through the masterpieces of literature, and extracted from them, if it is to be really taught. This last sentence, indeed, sums up the true significance of the Revival of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries in the department of education." *

Dean Colet, the founder of St. Paul's School, had said the same thing in substance long before.

"In the beginning men spake not Latin because such [grammatical] rules were made, but, contrariwise, because men spake such Latin, upon that followed the rules, and

* Lectures on Linguistic Method, p. 73.

were made. That is to say, Latin speech was before the rules, and not the rules before the Latin speech. Wherefore, well-beloved masters and teachers of grammar, after the parts of speech sufficiently known in our schools, read and expound plainly unto your scholars good authors, and show to them [in] every word, and in every sentence, what they shall note and observe, warning them busily to follow and do like both in writing and in speaking; and be to them your own self also speaking with them the pure Latin very present, and leave the rules; for reading of good books, diligent information of learned masters, studious advertence and taking heed of learners, hearing eloquent men speak, and finally, busy imitation with tongue and pen, more availeth shortly to get the true eloquent speech, than all the traditions, rules, and precepts of masters." *

A few hints and suggestions as to method will be added.

1. Formal or technical grammar is an abstract, metaphysical study, and the pupil should not enter upon it at too early an age. If he does, the time so spent is wholly or mainly lost, and future interest is impaired or altogether killed. Language exercises should form the regular approach to grammar.

2. The two main elements of the sentence may be taught in the fifth school year. That is, the child should be taught that every sentence has such elements, that they perform such and such functions, that there can be no sentence without them, that they form its framework or skeleton; and in addition he should be taught to point out the subjects and predicates of simple sentences. To centre the young mind on the subject and the predicate

* Quoted by Quick: Educational Reformers, pp. 533, 534.

as the two things that are essential to the expression of thought, is an important step in education.

3. In the sixth year the larger features of the doctrine of modifiers may be taught and illustrated; also the principal parts of speech—the noun, the verb, the pronoun, the adjective, and the adverb—and the pupil be required to practise upon suitable examples. No book should be used, nothing need be said about grammar, and the work should be affiliated with the language lessons.

4. Formal grammar with a text-book should begin with the seventh year. Etymology should first be taken up, if the sentence has been previously taught as recommended; if no attention has been given to the sentence, then the work should begin with analysis as before, but should proceed more rapidly.

5. For a time parsing and analysis should conform to definite models. This will secure regularity and thorough treatment. Afterward the two processes may be carried on more rapidly, dwelling only on the more difficult points. When a certain stage has been reached it is sheer waste of time to require a pupil to parse articles, to compare adjectives, to decline pronouns, and wearisomely to go through a prescribed formula even in handling the important etymological elements. The same may be said about analysis. Omit the nine questions that all can answer, and ask the tenth one that tests the knowledge of the class. In the high school, especially, a few questions skilfully directed will often lay open the whole structure of a sentence, and thus enable the class to move on. To guard against possible misapprehension, it may be well to say explicitly that parsing has an educational value. Pupils should be taught the facts and relations that are expressed by inflections and by position, and the best way to do it is to require them to describe the words, telling

what they are and naming their properties, for that is what parsing is. Observation and reflection are also cultivated.

6. Some pupils tend to think that the world of grammar is an unreal world, invented by authors and teachers to confuse and distract them. Hence it is important, as Professor Laurie says, that the method shall be as real as possible. Emphasize the fact that grammar deals with real things and is not artificial. Good grammatical definitions and rules express facts just as much as the definitions and rules of mathematics or physics; and to teach grammar is to teach these facts. Nowhere is it more important than here to prevent the pupil from filling his mind with mere words. Verbal knowledge about material facts is bad enough; verbal knowledge about words and sentences is even worse. It is an excellent plan to use the pupil's own original sentences, as it serves to make the work more real.

7. In teaching grammar to elementary pupils no time should be given to controverted points or really difficult points; the discussion of idiomatic constructions is wholly out of place; instruction should deal only with what is plain and simple, or at least relatively so. In the high school more difficult work may be entered upon; but even here it will be waste of time to crack the hard grammatical nuts that so much delight the experts. Such work belongs to a more mature state of mental development.

8. The first sentences that are chosen for analysis should be isolated as well as easy ones. If not, the pupil is likely to become confused and to miss his way. But in the eighth grade, and still more in the high school, real literature should be used as material. In this way pupils will get a much-needed lesson in the continuity of thought,

and in that larger grammatical structure which extends beyond the sentence, while grammar will be relieved of something of its barrenness. A connection should be established between grammar and literature and reading. Some literary questions should be introduced into the exercises and examination papers. Instead of putting down one or two disconnected sentences to be analyzed and parsed, place before the class a paragraph of prose or two or more stanzas of verse. The kind of exercise here recommended will show pupils that analysis is the great instrument of interpretation.

One important question is left unanswered, save as the answer is involved in what has been said. This is the question: What should be taught for grammar? In its details, the subject is much too large for this place.

Some examples of grammatical questions that go to the heart of a composition will be found in illustrative exercises at the close of previous chapters. A further exercise is given in this place.

Stanzas from Tennyson's Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington.

1.

Bury the Great Duke
With an empire's lamentation,
Let us bury the Great Duke
To the noise of the mourning of a mighty nation,
Mourning when their leaders fall,
Warriors carry the warrior's pall,
And sorrow darkens hamlet and hall.

2.

Where shall we lay the man whom we deplore?
Here, in streaming London's central roar.
Let the sound of those he wrought for,

And the feet of those he fought for,
Echo round his bones for evermore.

3.

Lead out the pageant: sad and slow,
As fits an universal woe,
Let the long, long procession go,
And let the sorrowing crowd about it grow,
And let the mournful martial music blow;
The last great Englishman is low.

The Duke of Wellington is buried in St. Paul's, the Cathedral Church of London. These questions may be asked:—

1. What empire is meant? What is an empire's lamentation? Explain line 6, stanza 1. Explain "hamlet and hall." Why is London called "streaming"? What is meant by the "feet echoing," etc.? What is a pageant?

2. Analyze the sentences of stanza 2.

3. Give case and construction of "Great Duke," line 1, "us," line 3, "pall," line 6, stanza 1; "whom," "London's," and "bones," in stanza 2.

4. What parts of speech is "mourning" in lines 4 and 5, first stanza?

5. Parse "warriors" and "warrior's" in line 6 of same stanza.

6. What mode is "bury" in lines 1 and 3?

7. What parts of speech are "sad" and "slow" in line 1, stanza 3?

8. Give the principal parts of the verbs in the last stanza?

This exercise is not above the eighth grade, provided the pupils have been properly taught. How many questions shall be asked, and how extended a passage shall

form the basis of the exercise, are questions of judgment for the teacher to answer, in which the strength of the pupils and the length of time that can be used will be controlling factors. When pupils are ready for such work as this, it is sheer folly to keep them grinding in the old-fashioned mill of analysis and parsing.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE FUNCTION OF RHETORIC.

THE history of rhetoric shows quite as much contrariety of view on the part of writers as to the nature and scope of the subject as the history of grammar. A slight *résumé* will answer our purpose.

Aristotle, author of the first systematic treatise on the subject that has come down to us, delivers this definition: "A faculty of considering all the possible means of persuasion on every subject."* He first inquires into the means employed in persuasion, and then treats of arrangement, style, and delivery. Quintilian, foremost of the Latin writers, considers rhetoric, oratory, and eloquence as the same thing, and gives this definition: "Oratory is the art of speaking well."† Dr. Campbell, like Quintilian, considers rhetoric and eloquence as coextensive. "The word 'eloquence,' in its greatest latitude," he says, "denotes 'that art or talent by which the discourse is adapted to its end.'"‡

Dr. Blair's Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles-Lettres, which was once more generally used in English and American schools than any other text-book on its subject, contains no definition. Dr. Whately's Elements of Rhetoric is consistently built up on this definition:

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* Book I, chap. ii. † Ibid, II, chap. xv.

‡ Philosophy of Rhetoric, Book I, chap. i.

"The finding of suitable arguments to prove a given point, and the skilful arrangement of them, may be considered as the immediate and proper province of rhetoric, and of that alone." *

These definitions are all in terms of art. Still, it would be a great mistake to suppose that the books from which they are taken all conform to that view of the subject. Aristotle's Rhetoric is thoroughly scientific, although not lacking in rules and practical suggestions. Quintilian's Institutes, while not destitute of principles, is rather a book of methods and practical suggestions. "Who is so destitute of common sense," he asks, "as to imagine that the work of building, or weaving, or moulding vessels out of clay is an art, but that oratory, the greatest and noblest of works, has attained such a height of excellence without being an art?" † Still, it must be said that the question in his mind is not so much a discrimination between art and science as it is between artistic oratory and natural oratory. Quintilian treated the subject so broadly as to become a conspicuous example of those ancient writers who, according to Dr. Whately, "thought it necessary to include, as belonging to the art, everything that could conduce to the attainment of the object proposed," and "introduced into their systems treatises on law, morals, politics, etc., on the ground that a knowledge of these subjects was requisite to enable a man to speak well on them; and even insisted on virtue as an essential qualification of a perfect orator." ‡ Dr. Campbell's title, Philosophy of Rhetoric, suggests a scientific treatise, and such is the character of his very able book. Dr. Blair says if his

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* Part I, chap. ii. † Book II. chap. xvii, 3.

† Elements of Rhetoric, Introduction.

work has any merit it will consist in an endeavour to substitute the application of the principles of reason and good sense in the place of artificial and scholastic rhetoric.* The same may be said of Dr. Whately's Elements as of Dr. Campbell's Philosophy; the treatment is scientific. Something of this confusion of thought and practice is no doubt due to the sense of the term "art" bequeathed by antiquity to modern times that has been remarked upon. Still, it would be wrong to suppose that such writers as Campbell and Whately did not see the distinction.

The authors of the text-books in current use tend decidedly to follow the old model. One prolific writer defines rhetoric as "the art of efficient communication." "It is the art," he says, "to the principles of which, consciously or unconsciously, a good writer or speaker must conform." This definition is found in a book entitled The Principles of Rhetoric. Moreover, the author defends his definition by saying that rhetoric "is an art, not a science; for it neither observes, nor discovers, nor classifies; but it shows how to convey from one mind to another the results of observation, discovery, or classification; it uses knowledge, not as knowledge, but as power." † Yes; but rhetoric does observe, discover, and classify its own processes. Another popular writer gives us the following definition: "Rhetoric, therefore, is the art of expressing one's thoughts with skill, of giving to one's composition the qualities that it ought to have in order to accomplish its author's design." ‡ And such is the general tenor of this class of works. #

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* Lecture i.

† A. S. Hill: The Principles of Rhetoric, Introduction.

‡ Genung: Outlines of Rhetoric, Introduction.

Dr. D. J. Hill observes that the rhetorical process is complete

Now, with all deference to authority, we may say that there are plainly three points of view from which rhetoric may be considered, as follows :—

1. It is a science : it is occupied with the principles that underlie the expression of thought by means of language. These principles are laws of the human mind ; they are discovered by psychological analysis of the mind, and are confirmed by the study of literary masterpieces.

2. It is an art in the reflective sense of that term : it lays down the rules, precepts, or methods that govern the expression of thought by means of language. These rules are deduced from the corresponding principles.

3. Rhetoric is also practice or exercise in the expression of thought. Moreover, this is the original signification of the word.

Slight examination of the text-books on rhetoric in current use suffices to show that they contain matter which falls under every one of these heads. They are partly scientific and partly practical ; they contain some principles or laws, some rules or precepts, some exercises or practical lessons. They are therefore a compound of science and of art under both aspects of art.

We come now to the real subject of the present chapter. This is the educational worth of rhetoric as taught, or as it should be taught, in schools. As everything that needs to be said of the primal value of exercises in com-

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only when the ideas of the speaker or writer are "referred to the pre-existing ideas of the person addressed in such a manner that they will affect the desired change." "All mental changes," he says, "take place in accordance with certain laws," and then propounds this definition: "As an *art*, rhetoric communicates ideas according to these laws; as a *science*, it discovers and establishes these laws. Rhetoric is therefore the science of the laws of effective discourse."—(The Science of Rhetoric, Introduction.)

position has been said already, we may confine our attention to principles and rules, with incidental remarks on the third topic.

As mental disciplines the science and the art of rhetoric have the same kind of value as the other studies belonging to the philosophic group. They stimulate observation and analysis. They deal with the philosophy of effective expression by means of language. They take hold both of thought and of the medium by which it is conveyed. Rhetoric deals with the universal element of expression; or, as Aristotle says, "It is conversant, not with any one distinct class of subjects, but like logic [is of universal applicability]"; or again, "Its business is not absolute persuasion, but to consider on every subject what means of persuasion are inherent in it."* Hence, psychological elements are involved.

It has been contended that rhetoric is a valuable moral discipline. This is a favourite view of Quintilian, who returns to it again and again. He insists that virtue is an element of oratory. If it be objected that a vicious man may succeed in an exordium, a statement of facts, or a series of arguments, he replies that so a robber may show the virtue of fortitude and a slave the virtue of endurance.† Dr. Whately corrects Quintilian's exaggerated view, saying that building materials are no part of architecture, although it is impossible to build without them, or subject-matter a part of rhetoric because there can be no speech or writing without it; and "that though virtue and the good reputation it procures add materially to the speaker's influence, they are no more to be, for that reason, considered as belonging to the orator as such than wealth, rank, or a good person, which manifestly have a

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* Book I, chap. ii. † Book II, chap. ii.

tendency to procure the same effect." * The real question lies deeper: it is the relation of æsthetics and ethics, and will be touched in the ensuing paragraph.

Rhetoric is a culture study as well as a disciplinary one. It fits the mind for the keener and more rational enjoyment of works of rhetorical art. While the enjoyments of taste—the sentiment of the beautiful as an absolute quality—is native to the mind, these enjoyments are greatly strengthened and elevated by cultivation. The notion that there is a universal standard of taste is a part of that sentimental view of human nature which came in with Rousseau. The rustic who said the paint on Rosa Bonheur's Horse Fair could not have cost more than ten francs had not studied æsthetics. On the negative side the argument is equally convincing. Men can not constantly follow their chosen vocations, but must have avocations as well. Answering the question, How shall the vacant spaces in life be filled up? Dr. Blair says that it can not be done more agreeably in itself, and more consistently with the dignity of the human mind, than in the entertainments of taste and the study of literature. "He who is so happy as to have acquired a relish for these has always at hand an innocent and irreproachable amusement for his leisure hours, to save him from the danger of many a pernicious passion. He is not in hazard of being a danger to himself. He is not obliged to fly low company or to court the rest of loose pleasures in order to cure the tediousness of existence." † The tapping of the fountains of the higher enjoyments—the opening up of the nobler tastes—is a godsend to any person, and particularly to any one who tends toward coarse pleasures.

It is to be feared that the reasons assigned above for

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* Introduction. † Lecture I.

the study of rhetoric will not prove very convincing to many minds. At least, we must boldly face the question that the typical American puts to everything, "What is its practical value?" The question may be subdivided: Is literary and oratorical skill desirable or not? Does the study of rhetoric conduce to the gaining of such skill, and if so, to what extent? Fortunately, the second question is the only one that we need to consider.

The confidence with which the old writers laid down their rules is well known to all persons who have read their books. Butler's well-known lines—

> "All a rhetorician's rules
> Teach him but to name his tools"—

express the sceptical view of their value. At the present time, the opinion of many teachers and critics of education runs in this direction. Let us see if we can discover where the truth lies.

The rules of rhetoric are of two kinds, mechanical and psychological. The rules for capitalization plainly belong to the first class. There is a mental convenience, to be sure, in some of them, as the one that requires a sentence to begin with a capital letter; but this rational element is so slight that we may drop it out of sight altogether. These rules are plainly conventional. Much the same may be said of punctuation. A punctuation scheme is mechanical but extremely convenient. It is, indeed, based on the articulations of thought, and requires clear insight, but this does not remove the subject from the mechanical category. Again, the rule that limits the use of words to the idiom of the language is also conventional. If it be said that the use of domestic words rather than foreign ones, or of live words in preference to dead ones, consults economy of effort, we may reply that the inhibition of slang is often enforced at the

cost of energy. Purity of diction rests on the conventionalities of speech, and can never be absolutely secured in a living language.

Now, it must be clear to everybody that some mechanical rules are indispensable to correct writing. It is not permitted even to genius to capitalize and punctuate just as it pleases, or not at all. Such rules make up the technique of composition. Still further, powerful as imitation is, no one will learn through it the arts of capitalization and punctuation. There must be rules, practice, and criticism. These rules may be furnished by a teacher rather than a book, but that makes no difference. Neither will imitation be found an effectual safeguard even in respect to purity of diction. Some forbidden words are likely to find their way into the vocabulary of the best-bred boys and girls, while an abundance will flow into the vocabulary of the majority. Hence the question, "How shall the barbarisms, and especially the slang, that infest popular speech be kept out of the written style of schoolboys and schoolgirls?" I have strongly recommended the constant use of good literature as a *catharsis* in English. Still, something more is necessary than merely to get pupils as far as possible to read good books and hear good conversations, important as these things are; there must be, as before, a resort to faithful correction. Experience shows that the pupil is little likely wholly to *grow off* his more inveterate faults, and resort must be had to the pruning knife.

The psychological elements of rhetoric are facts of the human mind. Such are the rules for propriety and precision of diction; they directly affect a writer's efficiency, for if words are used in strange senses, or if they mean more or less than the writer means, the reader is thrown into confusion. Imitation is the mainstay in secur-

ing these qualities, but it alone will not prove effectual. Again, the rules prescribed for the construction of sentences are purely psychological. Imitation is here less powerful than in matters that are more mechanical, and more depends upon the writer's creative faculties. It is manifest, for example, that the writer who has had his mind centred on the rule for unity is a much more competent critic of his own composition or of the composition of another than the writer who has not had such training; and that his criticisms, if persisted in, will favourably affect his own style. To be more definite, it will hardly be denied that the student who has grasped the precept that changes of the central subject of thought in a sentence destroy unity is more likely to keep his eye on this quality than the student who has not done so. Similar reasoning will hold of all the other essential proprieties of style. Study of the rule will secure a more careful thinking-out of the matter, and so better sentences. In numerous places I have laid stress on freedom and spontaneity in writing. What is here said of rules does not conflict with that doctrine; for the beneficial effect of criticism flows into style through unconscious cerebration. It is in this way that a second nature is created.

The current text-books give much space to figures of speech, and we may well consider that branch of the subject. However, the only question that we need to answer is, whether the writer who studies rhetoric will handle his figures better than the writer who does not.

First, it is clear that the definitions of figures express facts of the mind. The mind affirms the likeness and the sameness of things different; it delights in sharp contrasts and in brief pointed sayings; it attributes life to what is dead and brings the absent into its presence; it uses the name of one thing for another, and also ex-

changes the whole and the part. Is the careful discrimination of one of these figures from another, as simile from metaphor, or synecdoche from metonomy, of practical utility in the expression of thought? It may be answered that in respect to nothing is the young and ambitious writer of an active imagination more likely to go astray than in respect to figures. Still further, such a writer can hardly fail to derive advantage from a clearer thinking out of the doctrine of figures and the definitions of the leading figures separately. He may not think "personification" or "metaphor" as he writes, but his thinking will influence his writing nevertheless. Still more may be claimed for the rules relating to figures. The exuberant writer needs the discipline of good criticism as well as the influence of good models. And criticism always means rules. Reference may be made to the rules in regard to basing figures on distant resemblances, to putting two or more metaphors in one sentence, and the overcrowding and mixing up of figures in general.

Let us take a broader view of the subject. In his well-known essay entitled The Philosophy of Style, Herbert Spencer finds the causes of force in language in the principle of economy of the mental energies and sensibilities. After quoting some of the familiar adages, as that long sentences fatigue the reader, parentheses and involved constructions should be avoided, and Saxon-English words should be preferred to Latin-English, he thus states the principle that explains them:

"On seeking for some clue to the law underlying these current maxims, we may see shadowed forth in many of them the importance of economizing the reader's or hearer's attention. To so present ideas that they may be apprehended with the least possible mental effort is the desideratum toward which most of the rules above

quoted point. When we condemn writing that is wordy, or confused, or intricate—when we praise this style as easy, and blame that as fatiguing—we consciously or unconsciously assume this desideratum as our standard of judgment. Regarding language as an apparatus of symbols for the conveyance of thought, we may say that, as in a mechanical apparatus, the more simple and the better arranged its parts, the greater will be the effect produced. In either case, whatever force is absorbed by the machine is deducted from the result. A reader or listener has at each moment but a limited amount of mental power available. To recognise and interpret the symbols presented to him requires part of this power; to arrange and combine the images suggested requires a further part; and only that part which remains can be used for realizing the thought conveyed. Hence, the more time and attention it takes to receive and understand each sentence, the less time and attention can be given to the contained idea, and the less vividly will that idea be conceived."

The whole essay is an argument to show that this principle embraces the main elements of style. Whether Mr. Spencer is correct throughout in his contention or not, it is certainly true that the student who first grasps this principle sees the subject of expression in a new light, and is likely also to think his thoughts more clearly and to express them in stronger and more clarified diction. The simple idea that language is a vehicle to be used with largest effect and greatest economy can hardly fail to affect his style beneficially. To the proposition that a clear conception of the principles of expression will tend to improve expression, it is no reply to say that Homer never studied rhetoric, or that Dr. Franklin never went to college. The study of principles makes models effective. On this point Professor Minto may be quoted.

"I take it that the main use of rhetorical principles . . . is to quicken the beginner's natural judgment in his study of examples. He is placed in the midst of a host of writers, good and bad. The most effective writers naturally influence him most. He might learn from them as much as he wants of the art of composition without any guidance. He imitates what he admires, irrespective of all guidance. All of us acquire in this way the greater part of what skill we have. But while every great writer has his own inimitable charm, all effective writing is so in virtue of its compliance with certain general conditions. These general conditions the student may learn insensibly, but the most rudimentary of them admit of being stated, and the statement may stimulate and guide the student's own powers of observation and execution." *

For example, if sophomores in and out of college should lay hold of the rule that Minto thus states—"One object of language, perhaps we should not say *the* object of language, is the conveyance of ideas or feelings from one mind to another"—how much ambitious writing would be amended! Or if the whole array of writers who contribute to the current volume of printed matter should closely study Minto's amplification of this rule, how much vagueness, obscurity, and verbosity, with consequent loss of time and mental energy, would be saved!

"It is sometimes said that the object of language is to express thought. This is a misleading description for the student of composition. We want not merely to express, but to impress or communicate, which is not quite the same thing. In using language we have to consider not merely the putting of our thoughts into words,—the utterance or expression of what is in our

* Plain Principles of Prose Composition, p. 10.

minds; we have to consider also how to get our thoughts into the minds of others. Utterance might be comparatively easy, but the utterance must be such as to find an entrance elsewhere. We have not merely to pour the water out of the bottle. If this were all, we might trickle gently or gurgle and splutter convulsively as we pleased, with much the same result. We have to pour out in such a way that every drop may, if possible, be got into another bottle." *

To the arguments that have been presented in favour of the study of rhetoric, it may be replied that they assume greater persistence in the study and in the effort to improve one's composition than can be safely taken for granted. The good work that is begun in the high school, it may be said, is soon laid aside; and no matter how hard the teacher may have struggled to lift him to a high level of expression, the pupil soon falls back to the wonted level of his mind. The same may be said of many students who receive the severer discipline of the college. It is impossible to deny force to such a reply. The ease with which persons who have been trained in schools fall into slovenly habits of expression, and particularly of writing, on leaving school, is extremely discouraging, and would be surprising if we did not see so much of it. Still, it is not true that, even in the cases of the majority, the effect of rhetorical training is wholly lost; while in the cases of a minority it undeniably contributes materially to the formation of good style.

Accordingly, I believe in putting rhetoric in the high-school course, say about fifty lessons. It should come in the second half of the course, and, if possible, at the beginning of the last year. Put in this place, relative ma-

* Plain Principles of Prose Composition, p. 12.

turity of mind is secured, while there is also opportunity for a full year's practice in the light of rhetorical principles. It should be elementary in character. It should deal with the broader elements of the subject, shunning intricacies and niceties. It should be theoretical, but should be fully illustrated by examples, and be constantly re-enforced by practice in composition. It should sum up or codify the work already done in composition in respect to principles.* The examples that are used, as under the head of purity of style or of figures, should be chosen with particular care. Reference should be had, in choosing them, to the pupil's habits and surroundings, keeping an eye on the practical end. The examples should be palpable violations of sound principles, and should not be multiplied to weariness. Many of the text-books now in use are overloaded with "examples" and "exercises" to be corrected, some of which, moreover, are faulty only in the eye of a perverse critical ingenuity. Above all, rhetoric should be taught by a competent teacher. If definitions are merely memorized, and rules handled in a merely mechanical way, little benefit will result; but if the teacher meets the conditions that have been laid down, the study will be followed by good results along several lines. Students will obtain a broader outlook of the subject of expression. Many will form the habit of studying literature and style more closely. Some will get into the way of analyzing their own thoughts and their own style more thoroughly. Those who go to college will receive needed preparation for college work in the same subject; and those who do not, as a class, will be the better educated for their pains.

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* See Report of the Conference on English to the Committee of Ten, p. 91.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE FUNCTION OF CRITICISM.

In preceding chapters various observations have been made concerning the function and method of criticism in teaching the language-arts. It is deemed necessary, however, to give the subject the advantage of a formal chapter.

Criticism as here used is not another name for the science of æsthetics, which is the sense that Lord Kames puts upon the word in his well-known work,* but is the name of an art. Of practical pedagogical questions, few are harder to answer than the one that the term used in this connection suggests. The heading does not imply that what is true of any one of the language-arts is true of all of them, but only that so much is true of all of them that they may be advantageously brought under one general view. First, we must grasp the facts out of which the difficulty referred to arises.

1. All good expression with voice or pen is free and spontaneous. The good talker, the good reader, the good writer is untrammelled. This state of freedom relates as well to the language in which the thought is clothed as to the thought itself. Just as far as any cause interrupts this freedom, it interferes with one of the essential conditions of good thinking and of good expression. Every

* Elements of Criticism.

disturbing influence involves the loss to the work immediately in hand of whatever mental power it itself absorbs. This, as Mr. Spencer has explained in the passage quoted in the last chapter, is why language as a conscious art gets in the way of both expressing and receiving thought. Manifestly, language is like any other vehicle—whatever power is required to keep the wheels turning is subtracted from the efficiency of the machine. It is therefore a plain case of reducing friction to a minimum.

What has now been said is in full consonance with the sound theory of acquiring the language-arts. The word "expression" may imply a forcing or squeezing out of what is expressed, as in a winepress; but in speech or composition it is not so. A good speech or composition is never really *made;* it is not the product of a force that works from without; it does not come from the external application of methods and rules; it is rather the product of a force that works from within, or, better still, it is a growth from some root of knowledge or feeling in the mind itself. Without this inward creative force, which is far superior to conscious rules, no really good work can be done. Criticism has its place; but we never think of Shakespeare as building up his plays by foot-rule and plumb-bob. On this point nothing can be better than the following sentences from Professor W. C. Wilkinson: "Stimulus, more than criticism, is what the forming literary mind requires. Vigorous growth can better be trusted than the most laborious pruning knife, to give symmetry of form. Besides, only vigorous growth responds to the pruning knife with desirable results."* Still another writer has said:

"When Mozart was asked how he set to work to com-

* Quoted by Genung: The Study of Rhetoric.

pose a symphony he replied, 'If you once *think* how you are to do it, you will never write anything worth hearing; I write because I can not help it.' Jean Paul remarks of the poet's work: 'The character must appear living before you, and you must hear it, not merely see it; it must, as takes place in dreams, dictate to you, not you to it. A poet who must *reflect* whether, in a given case, he will make his character say Yes, or No, to the devil with him!' An author may be as much astonished at the brilliancy of his unwilled inspirations as his most partial reader. 'That's splendid!' exclaimed Thackeray, as he struck the table in admiring surprise at the utterance of one of his characters in the story he was writing." *

2. When children come to school, they have in most cases already contracted faults of expression—faults of articulation, pronunciation, grammar, and style. Few indeed are the children who are free from all these blemishes. Imitation is not a selective art, but it catches with great impartiality whatever comes within the sweep of its net. Furthermore, the child is reasonably certain to contract new faults if allowed to go on his own way. No amount of care on the part of parent or teacher can keep him wholly from bad models. Plainly, it would not answer to allow him to go on his way alone, even if that were possible. But it is not possible; the pupil must have positive direction, and it is not improbable that this will sometimes be wrong, and that his teachers will set him some bad examples. In these circumstances originates the necessity of criticism—what Professor Whitney calls "constant use and practice under never-failing watch and correction."

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* Dr. E. L. Youmans: The Culture Demanded by Modern Life, pp. 382, 383.

3. But the moment that any person who is engaged in expression begins to feel the "watch and correction" his mind is thrown into a self-conscious and abnormal state. He ceases to be wholly creative and becomes partly critical. His mind is divided, or "distracted." Moreover, rules at once become disturbing elements. For a talker, reader, or writer to give conscious attention to his errors, or consciously to apply the rules of reading, grammar, spelling, or rhetoric, is to sacrifice to an equal degree his immediate end. One of two things will happen: he will gain in correctness and lose in force, or he will lose in both correctness and force.

Such is the problem that the teacher of English has to confront. What is to be done?

One thing is clear. Because correction interferes with freedom we can not therefore set it aside, or unduly restrict its province. We can not consent to errors and vulgarisms because they are "spontaneous." We must discover some way of harmonizing the two factors, freedom and criticism. The question is one that confronts the teacher of any art. It is the imposition of restraint upon creative force—the adjustment of principles and rules to practice. It involves the practical relation of knowing and doing. It is an end that must be reached, as Radestock says, "by the aid of one of Education's trusty servants—the formation of habit, which changes functions, of whatever kind, originally performed but slowly and with effort, into rapid and skilful actions, performed with dexterity and ease; it makes study easier, and finally builds the bridge uniting theory with practice by changing dead knowledge into a living power."* How shall we build this bridge? At this point the language-

* Habit, p. 4.

arts offer greater difficulties than some others. A majority of people are peculiarly sensitive to criticism of their language, perhaps because language is a high test of cultivation. Fortunately, however, young children are less sensitive than older children or adults; indeed, if children are properly handled from the beginning, much of this timidity and shrinking may be avoided.

But to return to our question, What is to be done? How shall we build the bridge uniting theory and practice? While the following practical suggestions may not include the whole ground, they will nevertheless cover a considerable portion of it:—

1. In early years correction must rest directly upon authority; the parent or teacher must be the standard of correctness and taste. What is wanted is practice, and rules and reasons would be out of place. In respect to pronunciation, the pupil does not resort to the dictionary, or, if he does, he can not apply the key of sounds. The long, the short, and the obscure sounds of *a*, for example, can mean nothing to him until he has learned them by practice.

2. Correction to be effective must be repeated over and over again. It is the constant dropping that wears away the stone. Many are the strokes required to build the bridge. Hence, when the faults of children are numerous, they should not be attacked all at once, but in successive order.

3. The faults under correction at any time, both in respect to kind and number, should be chosen with reference to the child's age and mental progress. Faults of pronunciation and of grammar should be taken in hand as soon as the child begins to commit them; but faults of rhetoric, as of construction, and particularly of a refined character, should be left until a later time. For the

teacher to attack errors before the pupil is ripe for the attack, is most wearisome and disheartening alike to pupil and teacher. If needed stimulus is furnished, and good models are kept constantly in view, the pupil will in time *grow off* not a few excrescences that the teacher will, at an earlier date, fail to cut away with his pruning knife. Here as elsewhere no little labour is lost because it is done out of due time.

4. The teacher must not expect too much either at the end of the course or at any stage in its progress. This is indeed but a phase of the point last made, but it deserves special emphasis. College students going as teachers into high schools are not unlikely to be exacting. It must be remembered that some persons will never become good writers. To write well calls for creative power and literary taste, while many persons have been denied these gifts. Only a minority of the children in school will ever become masters of anything deserving to be called a literary style; and we must be content to see the majority reach, as the result of drill and practice, a formal correctness and propriety. Much the same is true of reading. The ready intuition, the rapid grasp of ideas, the light of imagination, the quick feeling, the flexible and well-modulated voice, which are essential to good reading, are gifts of a high order and are somewhat rare. No doubt practice can do much to develop these qualities, but it can not create them.

5. As the pupil mounts to the upper grades, he should be gradually introduced to rules and reasons. The personal authority of the teacher must slowly retire into the background. In other words, the art of criticism, which at first should not extend beyond "This is right" and "That is wrong," must be slowly turned toward the science of criticism. In this respect the language-arts are

not all alike. Pronunciation and grammar rest on usage or convention; so do the meanings of words; and so also do some features of rhetoric, as capitalization and punctuation, but the rules relating to clearness, energy, emphasis, and harmony of style are direct outgrowths of psychological facts. The laws of effective speech or writing are laws of the human mind; and it is idle to present them until they can be understood.

6. It is all-important that the teacher should correct the pupil's exercises, both oral and written, in a good spirit. Due pains must be taken not to put the pupil to shame, lest otherwise reactionary tendencies set in at once.* It must never be forgotten that while criticism looks to purely intellectual ends, these ends lie proximate to the pupil's sensibility. The channels of the young mind will not flow with clear and bright ideas if they are running turbid or violent with feelings that the teacher has excited by unnecessary or unkind criticism. In no other school exercise is it so necessary that the pupil shall be self-possessed as in composition, oral or written. No wheels are sooner blocked than the wheels of expression. As the pupil grows in years and in self-mastery, he can be, and he should be, treated with more severity, particularly if

* "Originality is a shy flower, and will unfold only in a congenial atmosphere. One may as well grasp a sea-anemone and expect it to show its beauty, as ask a child to write from his own experience when he expects every sentence to be dislocated in order to be improved. The sentences need improvement, no doubt, but that improvement will come under the influence of good models and quiet suggestions. The teacher of composition should never forget that 'the life is more than meat and the body than raiment'; that the spirit and thought of any exercise are more than the technical dress, and that if the former are developed, the latter will not be wanting."—(Miss H. L. Keeler: Preface to Studies in English Composition.)

careless; but the wind must be tempered to the shorn lamb. Still, as said before, much depends upon the regimen under which the child has been brought up. If he has been trained to express his ideas in writing from the beginning of his school life, and has been accustomed to well-tempered correction, the normal child will show little of that hesitation and fear which are so characteristic of youth who are required to prepare essays without having received the needed preparation, and he will consider the correction of his language exercises as much a matter of course as the correction of his arithmetic or grammar exercises. Besides, there should be commendation as well as blame. In the sage words of Quintilian: "In amending what requires correction, let him [the teacher] not be harsh, and least of all not reproachful; for that very circumstance, that some tutors blame as if they hated, deters many young men from their proposed course of study." *

7. To make possible that freedom which is so essential to the best work, many of the pupil's exercises, after he has made a fair start at least, should pass without any review or criticism other than his own. Criticism may be overdone. "It is a capital mistake," says Professor Wilkinson, "for boards of college oversight to suppose that they have done the best for the literary education of young men when they have provided them with an instructor who is willing to go through unlimited drudgery in the way of minute rudimentary criticism of their essays with the pencil or the pen." It must be remembered particularly that a degree of exuberance is natural to pupils who have reached a certain stage of advancement. In discussing this subject, too, Quintilian shows his usual good sense.

* Institutes of Oratory, ii 2, 7.

"The remedy for exuberance is easy," he says; "barrenness is incurable by any labour."

8. The pupil must be taught to play the critic himself —that is, to observe and correct mistakes of speech and composition. Such a habit naturally begins with the errors of others, but its proper end is self-criticism. The teacher can render, the better pupils particularly, no greater service than to start them well on this road.

It must be remembered that the end of criticism, as we deal with it, is wholly practical. It aims to correct faults and to develop excellences, and if it fails here it fails wholly. No doubt the science of criticism has disciplinary value, but this value is no reason why it should be brought into the elementary school or the high school. But criticism to be practical must be remembered, and be applied in the preparation of new exercises. Obviously, forgotten criticism is useless. Furthermore, the application of critical tests or rules involves some impairment of unconscious freedom, some growth of linguistic self-consciousness. But there is no helping it. Some disturbance from this source is inevitable. Two points, however, should be well guarded. One is to reduce the disturbance to a minimum in the first place, and the second to eliminate it as rapidly as possible. Comparative immunity from this disturbance is enjoyed by those persons who become so familiar with the critic that he loses his terrors in their eyes.

If errors are duly corrected; if at the proper time rules are steadily borne in upon the mind; if the habit of self-criticism is created; if the pupil consorts with good models—the bridge uniting theory and practice will be built, slowly indeed but well. Step by step corrections and rules will fall out of the conscious mind, because they are being transformed into habit, and self-criticism will become

mainly a matter of revision, after the first glow of speech or composition is over. The pupil who perversely puts his apostrophe on the wrong side of his *s*, and uses the objective form of the pronoun in room of the nominative form, will come to speak or write as he should do without once thinking of his former errors. He will develop a second nature that is stronger than first nature.

Because speaking and writing under restraint are hard and painful, we should not resort to license; the difficulty and pain will vanish as restraint passes into habit. Those persons, if any, who never need to create a second linguistic nature may be congratulated on their happy escape. But in the majority of cases the teacher must bend every effort to the end of transmuting knowledge into power. In so far as the art of composition is self-conscious, it is not unlike the art of penmanship. Here the aim is to produce with ease and skill certain conventional characters. The movements and strokes are at first awkward and painful; but as they become correct and automatic they also become easy and pleasant. Theory passes into practice. This transition is the most important one ever made in education, and particularly in morals: the transition from knowledge to power.

Something should be said of the "Nature" rules that are laid down in every book that deals with the language-arts. No exhortations are more common than these: "Speak according to Nature," "Read naturally," "Follow Nature in writing." These precepts, however, are but special applications of a general law that is thus formulated: "We must proceed in accordance with Nature." But what is the Nature that we are so earnestly commanded to follow?

Perhaps Aristotle was the first writer whose books

have come down to us that undertook to define the term.* From the day that he gave his definitions, the part that Nature plays in education has been more or less recognised, and especially since Rousseau wrote his epoch-making book. Much that has been written upon the subject, not to say most, has been extremely vague and misleading. A discriminating writer has said that "probably nine tenths of the popular sophistries on the subject of education would be cleared away by clarifying the word 'Nature.'" †

Now the precept to "follow Nature" can not mean that education in talking, reading, and writing shall be without direction of any kind. Such a canon would exclude reading and writing altogether, and also speaking according to a cultivated standard, because these are all arts. This can not therefore be what is meant by speaking, reading, and writing "naturally." Nor, secondly, can the precept mean that the child shall be taught the language-arts, but shall be left without guidance or direction. That would be absurd, since there is no telling what pranks "Nature," left to herself would play, and since, strictly speaking, the requirement would involve a contradiction. Hence we are again thrown back upon the question, What is the Nature that is set up as a criterion to be followed?

Professor Davidson, in his admirable chapter on Nature and Education, tells us that, applied to living things, the term "Nature" is used in two distinct senses, which "are often confounded," to the great detriment of educational theory and practice. "In one sense it is the character or type with which a thing starts on a separate career,

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* The Metaphysics, Book IV, chap. iv.

† S. R. Sill: The Atlantic Monthly, February, 1883, p. 178.

and which, without any effort on the part of that thing, but solely with the aid of natural forces, determines that career." The acorn, the bean, the chick, the whelp, and the cub are given as examples. "In the other sense, 'Nature' means that highest possible reality which a living thing, through a series of voluntary acts originating within or without it, may be made to attain." * These he calls the "original" and the "ideal" senses of the word. Obviously, it is in the second of the two senses that the term is used, or should be used, in dealing with rational education.

The latest translator of the Émile, subjecting the "Nature" of that book to analysis, finds that it contains the three elements of simplicity, reality, and personal experience. "Simplify your methods as much as possible; distrust the artificial aids that complicate the process of teaching; bring your pupil face to face with reality; connect symbol with substance; make learning, so far as possible, a process of personal discovery; depend as little as possible on mere authority. This is my interpretation of Rousseau's precept, 'Follow Nature.'" † Nothing more definite than this, I conceive, can be extracted from the Nature doctrine in education. While this is much—very much—it still leaves the teacher who is seeking for practical guidance at a loss as to details. About all, therefore, that the "Nature" rules in the language-arts can mean is this: The teacher and the pupil alike should study closely the composition to be read, and the subject to be handled in speech or essay; they should attend to the character of the thought and feeling, respect the proprieties of time and place, and inquire what is "natural," all of which is

* Education of the Greek People, chap. i.

† Dr. W. H. Payne: Introduction.

but another name for the exercise of good sense. The teacher should regard the general facts of the mind and the individuality of the pupil; she should, as Matthew Arnold might have said, "let her intelligence play freely upon the facts involved in each case." The "Nature" rules assume that there is some common standard of excellence, some general ideas or usages in relation to what is good and what is bad; and this assumption we may safely accept. To accept it, however, does not imply that this standard is to be ascertained by consulting each individual man, or by throwing the question open to a popular vote; it is, rather, the opinion and the usage of those most competent to extract from the facts their deepest meaning.

Upon the whole, it must, therefore, be said that the "Nature" rules are rather vague and indefinite for practical guidance in the schoolroom; that they are, however, the only final and authoritative rules that can be given; and that the teacher must, at least within limits, extract them from the composition, the subject, the child, and the occasion, as they present themselves. Such a quest, if successful, can not be separated from good models. The teacher who makes it will soon discover that uniformity must be shunned and diversity be cultivated. The motto "The style is the man" expresses a profound truth which lies at the basis of the "Nature" rules. This is the reason why, to refer to a well-known passage in Mr. Spencer's Essay, Johnson is pompous and Goldsmith simple, one author abrupt, another rhythmical, and a third concise. This is the reason why the perfect writer writes like Junius when in the Junius frame of mind, like Lamb when he feels as Lamb felt, and like Carlyle when in the Carlylean mood.

In the preceding pages I have emphasized the key words to the language-arts, viz., imitation and practice, models and correction. The teacher's practical problem is to correlate the two main ideas that these words express. While the boy who hears good English spoken and read, and reads good books, will far distance the boy who does not hear such English and read such books, it must not be supposed that he will proceed on this pleasant path until he wakes up some fine morning to find himself a good speaker or a good writer. Nor must it be supposed, on the other hand, that the boy of practice and correction will attain that end if models and imitations are wanting. Both elements are called for; but models and imitation come first, and they are of the greater value.

CHAPTER XIX.

TEACHERS OF THE LANGUAGE-ARTS.

It is stated in the first chapter of this work that to teach English successfully requires a combination of cultivation, task, judgment, and practical skill not found in the common teacher. The unsatisfactory character of English instruction in the schools is also ascribed, in part, to the incompetency of teachers. Still further, casual references to the teacher question are found scattered through the book. A dealing with the topic still more direct and definite is, however, called for, and I may fitly bring my task to a close with a brief chapter on the qualifications of teachers of the language-arts.

The remarks made hitherto have had principal reference to teachers in the more advanced stages of the work. In the case of primary teachers, at least those found in the first grades, qualifications to teach these arts are the principal things to be looked at, pedagogically speaking, in selecting them. So very important at this stage of progress is instruction in oral speech, in language lessons, and in the art of reading! The qualifications required are clear perception of the elements of the arts, their relations to real knowledge, and skill in bringing these elements into connection with young minds. In the more advanced grades, and in the high school, the range of instruction that the teacher is called upon to furnish is much wider than in the lower grades, and the language-

arts are relatively much less important; still, owing to the wider and higher character of the work to be done in these arts, far higher attainments in the teacher are necessary. The idea has seized the minds of some school superintendents and board members, that almost anybody "will do" to teach English to children. The fact is just the contrary. The teaching of literature in particular can not be subjected to the processes that are so successful in science, mathematics, and the classics and modern languages. In no other high-school chair, perhaps, can an incompetent teacher, and particularly one possessed by notions and hobbies, do so much harm as in the chair of English literature.

Some remarks have already been made on special teachers of English in connection with the subject of concentration. Returning to that question, I avow the opinion that in the early grades such a teacher would be most undesirable, and that the departmental method of teaching in elementary schools is based on false principles. The child's mind is one, and, for the most part, his lessons should be taught by one teacher. To cut up his mind into fragments and piece them out to a group of teachers who are likely to know little of what they are severally doing, who are certain not to know fully, and who become competitors for the child's time and mental energy, is most mischievous. In high schools, and especially in the first year, specialization is sometimes carried to a harmful extent. Still, the time will come when a special teacher of English should be employed. On this point the recommendation of the Conference on English made to the Committee of Ten may be quoted with approval, the only doubtful point being whether the time set for the advent of the special teacher is not too early.

"In the opinion of the Conference, it is expedient that

the English work during the last two years of the grammar-school course (including formal grammar, reading, and composition) should be in the hands of a special teacher or teachers. But the appointment of such teacher or teachers should not be held to exclude the instructors in other subjects from the oversight of the English of their pupils. It is only by cordial co-operation in all departments that satisfactory results in this direction can be obtained. To the lack of such joint effort the present unsatisfactory condition of English study in the high schools and colleges may be in great part ascribed." *

What is here said about co-operation among all the teachers of the school, in order to secure intensive work, and about the special teacher as well, can not be too strongly insisted upon.

But there is a more important question than this one. It is far more important to have special exercises in English than it is to have a special teacher. The doctrine of concentration has limits that can not be passed. Lessons in geography or arithmetic, and still more lessons in history, may be made lessons in English, in reading, even in composition, with good results; but such lessons can not be made to answer the purpose of prescribed lessons in those subjects. No school exercise is useful *in an eminent degree* in more than one direction at the same time. Probably the geographical readers, the historical readers, the physiological readers, etc., that have appeared within the last few years answer a certain purpose, but it is easy to overestimate their value. Physiology, geography, and history can not be taught successfully by means of general reading exercises, nor can reading as an art be taught properly by means of such books. There must be specific

* Report of the Committee of Ten, p. 90.

books and exercises for each of these purposes. Two studies, and much less a larger number, can not be merged into one study. Hence the readers just referred to can, at best, be nothing more in their several subjects than supplemental reading books. Still more, even if there were no psychological objection to turning the English over to the teachers of the school collectively, to one as much as to another, it would be impossible to find teachers in sufficient numbers competent to do the work.

Again, if the English be distributed, assigning reading to one teacher, composition to another, and literature to a third, all three should be carefully selected. But the teacher of literature should be chosen with peculiar care. To aptness to teach and sufficient breadth of reading should be added literary taste and appreciation, insight or penetration, soundness of judgment, correct ideals, and a good reading voice. Like other studies, literature can be understood only through the apperceiving process; moreover, since literature is a transcript of mental life—an expression of thought and feeling—the facts, ideas, and images that are essential to its interpretation, on the part of both pupil and teacher, must come from the same source. This is reason enough why the teacher should be a person who has had some experience of life and has accumulated some store of thought. In a word, no person can succeed in teaching this subject who has not some real cultivation. Here, if anywhere, the old Jewish maxim must hold: "He who learns of a young master is like a man who eats sour grapes, and drinks wine fresh from the press; but he who has a master of mature years is like a man who eats ripe and delicious grapes, and drinks old wine."

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